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Florence P. Dwyer

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# REPORT TO THE PEOPLE FROM YOUR CONGRESSWOMAN

FLORENCE P. DWYER - 6th District, New Jersey



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Thursday, September 21, 1961

After a year of political controversy here in Washington and of stepped-up military preparations to meet international crises abroad, it is especially fitting that Congress should be devoting much of its time in these last days of the session to a pair of bills concerned with peace.

One bill would establish the Peace Corps as a permanent agency. The other would create a new Arms Control Agency. Both measures, in a very basic way, are far-reaching expressions of our country's deepest hopes for peace and freedom. Despite differences of opinion about the merits or timeliness of the two proposed agencies, both bills, too, are essentially bi-partisan in sponsorship and support--testifying to the great significance and the cautious expectations which many of us feel in regard to the legislation.

Neither bill, as I write this report, has received final Congressional approval, though prospects for both appear to be good. The House and Senate have each passed a somewhat different version of the Peace Corps bill which now must go to a conference committee of the two houses where the differences will be resolved. A similar procedure will probably be required for the Arms Control Agency bill since the Senate-passed version differs in certain important respects from the companion bill favorably and unanimously reported last week by the House Foreign Affairs Committee. The two bills deserve broad support, and I hope the leadership on both the Democratic and Republican sides will cooperate to pass the bills this week.

Frankly experimental.

Of the two, the Peace Corps is undoubtedly the more familiar to the general public. It is frankly experimental and just as frankly based on the idealism of American young people. As a means of channeling youthful energies and expansive spirits along paths of constructive service, the Peace Corps is a unique and potentially very valuable instrument. Especially in the poorer,

--more--

less developed lands of Africa, Latin America and Asia, Peace Corps volunteers can perform highly useful services and at the same time display the American spirit of cooperation in its most attractive light.

Sceptics, of course, question whether the idealism of youth is a substantial enough foundation for a program directly involving our country's international position. Others doubt whether the spirit of the Peace Corps -- so essential to an organization founded on idealism and dependent upon volunteers -- can survive the smothering effects of Federal bureaucracy.

To entertain such doubts, I believe, is to be realistic. The hazards are serious ones and require the most careful kind of leadership if they are to be avoided. Nevertheless, we have a priceless opportunity in this program to show the world that America has an understanding and compassionate heart, and to demonstrate that our people accept the obligations of brotherhood even in a world in which we are forced to maintain an all-powerful arsenal of destruction. The expression of this spirit will be personal, not governmental, and this will give to the Peace Corps its truly distinctive form.

One of the most moving and persuasive speeches in support of the Peace Corps bill was made on the House floor by a Republican Congresswoman from suburban Chicago, Mrs. Marguerite Stitt Church, an acknowledged conservative and a Member who consistently has opposed such legislation as foreign aid. She summed up her attitude this way:

"I willingly again admit the possibility of failure. But here is something which is aimed right --- which is American, which is sacrificial -- and which above all can somehow carry at the human level, to the people of the world, what they need to know; what it is to be free; what it is to have a next step and be able to take it; what it is to have something to look forward to, in an increase of human dignity and confidence."

Faith is justified

This is what the issue comes down to: whether, in the final analysis, we have enough faith in our own good will and in our own capacity to help others, out of a pure spirit of brotherhood, to take a chance with this new and untried idea. I believe this faith is justified and I believe this idea can work. As a practical matter, if we can afford billions of dollars annually in subsidies for corn and wheat, then we can also afford this modest investment in youth and in international understanding.

The purpose of the proposed Arms Control Agency is just as persuasive and perhaps even more vital. As I see it, its great task is to prepare carefully thought out

alternatives to the present arms race between West and East which, if allowed to continue unchecked, can lead only to mutual destruction. With the Defense Department properly concentrating on preparing our armed forces to meet every military challenge and the State Department necessarily preoccupied with the daily crises of a deteriorating international situation, a skilled and independent group is clearly needed to do the long-range planning and analysis on which future policy can securely and reliably be based.

There is nothing at all contrary in planning for effective and enforceable arms limitation even while we are building the world's mightiest military machine. They should be indispensable parts of the same total effort. Since the objective of our military policy is not to destroy half the world but to prevent communist aggression from destroying freedom, then we should, in prudence, be as prepared for success as we are for failure. Once we have forced communism to restrain its aggressive tendencies by demonstrating that such aggression can only bring their own destruction, we must be ready with workable plans for mutual control and limitation of armaments.

It will be the job of the new agency to make the detailed scientific studies, to develop the techniques of detection and inspection, and to understand the economic and political consequences of disarmament on which a workable and enforceable arms control system will depend. Casual plans or untested theories can only get us into trouble. But careful study and systematic planning can pave the way toward a safer world.

The goal of arms limitation is one on which our two political parties are united. The proposed new agency, therefore, is a natural development of the disarmament organizations earlier created by President Eisenhower, and the new form it will take is a direct result of the experience of the former Administration.

If history teaches us anything, it teaches the compelling lesson that a safe, secure and peaceful world will not come about automatically. It can be achieved only if we work for it just as determinedly as we prepare for the possibility of war. Congress will have earned the gratitude of the nation if, in these last few days, we can bring into being the Peace Corps and Arms Control agencies and thereby invigorate the work of planning for peace.

On this hopeful note, Congress is expected to adjourn late this week. If so, this will be the last of my regular Reports to the People for the first session of the 87th Congress, and it will be followed as soon as practicable after adjournment by my annual summary of the year's work here on Capitol Hill.