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M. Tannenbaum

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

date May 6, 1983
to Executive Committee
from Donald Feldstein
subject Executive Committee Meeting - April 20, 1983

Our meeting of April 20th was extremely useful. I will try in a very brief fashion to summarize action proposals and amendments to the material which you reviewed.

1) Procedures:

Our planning and budgeting will henceforth attempt to follow a regular annual cycle as follows: In consultation with the officers, the Executive Vice President will prepare a statement to the annual Board Institute on overall AJC priorities for the coming year. In February and March, the various commissions will work to translate those priorities into a year-ahead program plan. In April, the Executive Committee will meet, as it did this year, to review those year-ahead program plans with the following changes:

- a) There will be a more uniform and shorter form for reporting from each department.
- b) The review will cover all departments, not just the five program commissions.
- c) There will be an attempt to indicate the percentage of staff time devoted to each of the major issues or some other form of functional budgeting.

In May, a revised charge, such as the summary which follows, will go to all the departments indicating what the Executive Committee has recommended from their year-ahead program plans. During the summer, budgets for the coming fiscal year will be prepared and reviewed with the Executive Vice President, and through late summer and fall the Budget Committee will review each of the departmental budgets and the total agency budget to see if it conforms to the priorities established, as well as reviewing it for general efficiency and effectiveness.

Finally, part of the procedure of identifying priorities for the next Board Institute will be to evaluate what has happened with the priorities identified the year before. It was also suggested that one element in our general procedures should be a review of what other agencies in our field are doing. This could lead to a decision to back away from some areas or to pursue them more aggressively, but, in any event, they should be known.

2) Suggestions regarding the presentations offered to the Executive Committee:

- a) Domestic Affairs: There was a strong consensus that Arab influence and the new forms of anti-Semitism, i.e., charges of dual loyalty, Third World influence, etc. as a package, should receive a much greater priority than appears to be the case in this presentation. We are to provide additional staff resources to this effort, review what is being done in various departments and provide some program coordination for the efforts in the various departments. A second priority in the Domestic Affairs area was to maintain our "social justice" agenda, with interest expressed in the "Jews on the Edge" project and, whether it is National Service or some other issue, finding some major national domestic issue on which we lead rather than follow. This third priority is of critical importance in view of the coming Presidential elections and may offer AJC the opportunity for enhancing its influence in the general community and the political process. There was also recognition of the importance of the commission's work in the field of pluralism, the strength of which is of special importance for the Jewish community. The other items in the Domestic Affairs presentation were slated for less attention, or, in some cases such as the "Women in the Law" project, dropping them completely. This was recommended with the recognition that there has to be some degree of coverage and responsiveness to a general domestic agenda.
- b) IPGI: Of the various program areas suggested by IPGI, there was interest in stressing the interethnic relations as being important and also in line with the priority on the new anti-Semitism mentioned above. It is recognized that, in order to do a job well in this area, some maintenance in general IPGI programs has to be done, but it was pointed out that this is of a lesser priority. It was also felt that the example of the Midwest office might be a model for defusing political tensions as we move into the 1984 election year. The work with suburban youth is also

a possible model in relation to our desire to consider whether human relations training should become a higher agency priority. As for the other things mentioned in the IPGI report, there was no negative reaction to any of them, but it was understood that much of it, just because of the lack of resources, will have to receive lesser attention.

- c) Interreligious Affairs: There was a good deal of support for all of the suggested priority programs. Again, it was understood that there may have to be some priority setting among them and, therefore, a first priority for Interreligious Affairs, which I expressed, was the development of a more functioning and decision-making commission.
- d) JCAD: The work with academics was seen as supporting the Arab influence priority, and there was no objection to my expression of high priority for the development of the program with intermarried couples as being a potentially very significant one. The general consensus was that in making choices among the programs, JCAD should take pains not to be imitative, but to carve out a unique role and contribution, even when it is covering territory also covered by others. Some skepticism was voiced on the ability to make a unique contribution in the Jewish educational area, but there was no objection to this being pursued.
- e) Foreign Affairs: There was general agreement that we need to study, as suggested in the Foreign Affairs document, ways in which we might upgrade our contribution to the welfare and strengthening of Jewish communities around the world outside Israel. However, more study is needed this year by the Foreign Affairs Department as to the form this should take. Should it be the addition of staff in one or more of our foreign offices, or the opening of new offices? If so, where and to do what? Would we be better off using ad hoc project staff for specific programs or, as some people suggested, will we do the most effective job of supporting our Foreign Affairs programming by adding to our presence in Washington, DC? Are these options necessarily exclusive?
- f) It was also agreed that a joint task force involving the relevant departments should explore the hard question of where we go with an AJC position on family and life style issues, where different departments have sometimes diverged.

DF:mt

cc: Department Heads

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