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TO : ARA - Ambassador Gordon DATE: June 8, 1966
FROM : ARA/IAS - George Lister
SUBJECT: This Morning's Conversation with Rogers and MacLeish

This memorandum concerns our conversation yesterday, and the possibility of enlisting the cooperation of Bill Rogers and MacLeish in arranging for the new "Center for Inter-American Affairs" to establish a permanent system of prizes, awards, etc., for deserving Latin American intellectuals. Since the "Center" is avowedly interested in Latin American culture it would seem an appropriate vehicle for this purpose. The arguments in favor include the following.

- 1) Many Latin American intellectuals are very sympathetic to Communism, third worldism, neutralism, or at least to anti-U.S. movements and arguments.
- 2) Most Latin American intellectuals are extremely sensitive about U.S. ignorance and lack of recognition of Latin American cultural achievements. This reinforces their misconceptions about gringo materialism, cultural backwardness, inability to understand the finer things of life, etc. Thus far, much of our activity in the field of awards in Latin America has consisted of pinning medals on the military.
- 3) Moscow has been exploiting effectively various forms of cultural recognition to influence Latin American intellectuals.
- 4) It should not be difficult to arrange for annual awards to deserving Latin American intellectuals, who would presumably come up here to receive their prizes. There is no question but that this would achieve a favorable impact throughout Latin America.

The following

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The following are some questions to be considered:

1) Should the U.S. Government be overtly connected with this operation? Possibly not. On the other hand, an entirely private operation might produce a situation in which the American intellectual or intellectuals presenting the awards would be extreme critics of the U.S. Government, our Viet-Nam policy, etc.

2) Would a few Communists be included among the award winners? That would probably be necessary, since a high percentage of the very top men in some fields (e.g. painting) are Communists. This would involve the risk of our award being rejected dramatically by some anti-American intellectuals.

3) Should the awards be granted solely on the basis of intellectual and artistic achievement, or should they also be tied to some "cause" (freedom, peace, Inter-American relations, etc.)? Should we try to ensure a broad distribution of awards, to include all Latin American countries?

4) Should the judges be exclusively United States citizens? Perhaps a few Latin Americans should be included.

5) It would be desirable to display appreciation of the product, in addition to awarding a prize. For example, a book would be translated, a painting exhibited, etc.

6) Should the awards be arranged so as to include the granting of a number of scholarships to deserving students for study in the United States, in the name of the prize winner?

7) It would

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7) It would also be very useful to arrange for much more U.S. recognition of Latin American intellectual achievement at a lower level (e.g., local scholarships for outstanding secondary school students who cannot afford to go to college).

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