

SOARING

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AN EDITORIAL

Billions For The Top . . . But What for Popular Goodwill?

By JON D. CARSEY
PRESIDENT

The Soaring Society of America

An editorial in a great American newspaper had this to say, among other things, of the Olympic Games: "Conducted as it is on a basis of friendly rivalry, the Olympics could do more for World peace than some of our recent diplomatic debates have accomplished." (One cannot but feel that the Editor was being kind when he omitted "and billions" after "diplomatic debates.")



Jon D. Carsey

It was impossible to read this without thinking of the many letters that have come to us in response to our requests from various Departments of our own Government reading: "The Department is aware of the value of bringing together leading experts in motorless flight and fully approves of the private participation of Americans in the Soaring Championships in Spain; however, the Department is not in a position to accord travel assistance to the Soaring Society and the group of American pilots who plan to attend."

It is poor policy, as modern history of the last two decades has demonstrated both at home and abroad, to pour large sums of money in at "the top" without equal regard for the wishes and requirements of those who form public opinion and eventually control "the top."

Doubtless there is wisdom in the decision of the astute Averell Harriman's Mutual Security Agency to spend \$100,000,000 in Spain to give us sea and air bases there. But isn't it worth suggesting that when we spend that much at "the top," we should not lose all possibilities of value by remaining aloof and unknown to the masses of the people, who are true guardians of a nation's policies?

A very small portion of funds appropriated for pouring in at "the top," allocated to a program that would acquaint European people with Americans—the real red-blooded American type who participates in athletic and sporting competitions—would create immense popular goodwill to back up our military presence in Europe.

Our Government presently (through the Department of State and its division of International Conference and its Division of Exchange of Persons) conducts a program that brings a limited number of lecturers from Europe to America. Our Government also contributes to many educational efforts of various kinds throughout the world through UNESCO. Apparently nothing is done to take advantage of the well known and accepted fact that to gain a person's friendship is to meet him on the friendly ground of his avocation, — his hobby.

Again, it would not be suggested that additional American dollars be spent in foreign lands, but that consideration be given to diverting some of that already being spent to the cause of friendliness where it will count, regardless of the government in power at any time.