

200 R
Lincoln Center

DEC 13 1956

LFK		LFK
CBF	SEP 10 '56	CM
JM		JM
CLT	SEP 11 '56	CLT

August 28, 1956

Dear Chauncey:

You will be interested in the attached clipping from this morning's New York Times. As you know, the Foundation has in prospect a decision about making a substantial capital grant to the Performing Arts Center now being planned for Lincoln Square.

It would be very helpful if you could be in position to advise us as to possible involvements arising out of the extensive condemnation of private housing which will apparently be required. A distinction should be drawn between the total of the Lincoln Square project and a much smaller portion of it which would be used for the Performing Arts Center. I believe, for example, that the Opera has already committed itself to buy certain property in the area.

What we might be concerned about is the Foundation's role if the Performing Arts Center itself depends upon substantial condemnation of private property. As an old-fashioned Jeffersonian liberal, I have been skeptical about the propriety of condemnation proceedings for what may be, in effect, private purposes. One can argue that an Opera House, a Philharmonic auditorium and the Juilliard School are sufficiently "public" to sustain condemnation. It remains, however, that they are structurally private organizations who provide little or no public service free of charge. My present guess is that there is an adequate legal basis for condemnation, but I am not at all comfortable about the broad policies involved and the Foundation's position if we should find ourselves in the middle of violent controversy on the public policy point. Presumably, the condemnation which the City has in mind is based on the theory of slum clearance. This may suggest that the Foundation take no part in the development until after the City has completed whatever action it has in mind on the slum clearance thesis.

These may not even be the right questions but I wanted to call your attention to the New York Times story and invite you to mull it over.

Cordially,

DEAN RUSK

Dean Rusk

Mr. Chauncey Belknap
One Wall Street
New York 5, New York

DR:clt