

June 29, 1981

Mr. Robert S. McNamara

Dear Bob:

I have been anxious about and delayed writing this letter for some time. It is simply not possible to capture almost 13 years in a few lines. There is also something vaguely presumptuous about commenting on your commitment to the world's poor, whose needs and qualities you have championed. After all, I am not one of them and, further, there is something self-congratulating about praising values which I have come to find myself so much in sympathy.

But mainly I am self-conscious about saying straight out how important you have been to me and that I will miss you. You may not realize the great influence you have exercised, not just as a spokesman for those who are excluded access to productive lives, but also on those who have worked with and come to know you. For us, you have set many examples: rationality, ethical behavior and a healthy disrespect for the incidences of prestige and power. While it is recently fashionable to downplay a life or career-style devoted to public service, the fact is, you have had alternatives and preferred to exercise your skills and expend your emotional energy on people who do not know you and on matters where the results may not be experienced for a long time. It is that example of the necessity to accept delayed--perhaps never to be seen--gratification which has been of such great influence.

I have little doubt, and you must know, that some of the criticisms to which you have been subject in recent years from the political and financial establishment derive from the fact that you are and could be one of them but have chosen a different path. Your values have threatened their sense of security. Your vulnerability threatens their sense of certainty. You have used the tools and methodology of entrepreneurial science for social good. As you put it when we first met, "It beats hell out of selling automobiles."

It is all of these qualities I will miss. You will not be replaced.

Thanks and take care.

With great affection,

*Samuel H. Butler*