REBUTTAL IS MADE BY SCHLESINGER

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Explains Comment on Times but Editor Stands Firm

Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. has challenged the assertion that he was mistaken in reporting that The New York Times suppressed a dispatch about the build-up for the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961.

Mr. Schlesinger, author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning book, "A Thousand Days," and a former special assistant to President Kennedy, made his rebuttal in a letter to the editor of The New York Times. The letter, written from the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, N.J., on June 9, read as follows:

"My attention has been called to a speech by Clifton Daniel, managing editor of The Times, in which he claims that I mistakenly wrote in the book 'A Thousand Days' that The Times had suppressed a dispatch from Tad Szulc describing the C.I.A.-Cuban refugee invasion build-up before the Bay of Pigs. I trust I may be permitted comment.

Denies Making Statement

"1. Actually my account of the episode on page 261 of 'A Thousand Days'—a passage quoted in its entirety by Mr. Daniel—does not say that The Times suppressed the Szulc dispatch. The account reports that James Reston "counseled against publication" but at no point does it say that the piece was killed. [Mr. Reston, now an associate editor of The Times, was then its chief Washington correspondent].

"In short, Mr. Daniel's evidence does not sustain his charge; and, since one assumes that the managing editor of The Times knows how to read, I am at a loss to know what point he was making in quoting a passage which does not say what he claims it says. The only reference in the book to The Times having killed the story occurs in connection with the Cuban missile crisis.

"2. Mr. Daniel goes on to confirm my account of Reston's recommendation. He also concedes that The Times deliberately played down a story which its editors knew deserved a multi-column head and the never before had the front-page play in The New York Times been changed for reasons of

policy.

"He further concedes that The Times cut out the statement that the invasion was imminent, that The Times eliminated all reference to the C.I.A. [Central Intelligence Agency] and that The Times otherwise emasculated what would normally have been a dispatch of vital importance.

"It was this considered and purposeful emasculation by The Times of its own story which

led President Kennedy subsequently to tell Turner Catledge, 'If you had printed more about the operation you would have saved us from a colossal mistake' and which led me in 'A Thousand Days,' in retrospect I have wondered whether if the press had behaved responsibly, it would not have spared the country a disaster. [Mr. Catledge, now executive editor of The times, was managing editor at the time involved].

Apologizes for Error

"3. Mr. Daniel is correct in saying that I misstated the situation on 'Meet the Press' instead of saying that The Times was 'reprehensible in misleading the American people by suppressing the Tad Szulc story.' I should have said 'by emasculating the Tad Szulc story.'

"I am sorry for that and can only plead that unpremeditated oral comments are less considered than written testimony. In a common respect for accurate information, I would hope that Mr. Daniel will now modify the charge he made—and in a premeditated speech—against 'A Thousand Days.'

Commenting on the letter, Mr. Daniel said yesterday:

"Mr. Schlesinger should read his own book—an excellent book—more carefully. Page 261 must be taken in conjunction with page 809, where, dealing with the Cuban missile crisis, Mr. Schlesinger wrote, '...once again The Times killed a story about Cuba.'"

Mr. Daniel's speech was delivered at the World Press Institute at Macalester College, St. Paul, Minn., on June