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File in Eugene's
Sedley
jerrycatchall@comcast.netFW: Re: McAdams review of James Douglass's JFK
and the UnspeakableSaturday, December 12, 2009
5:48:17 PM

From: jlesar@mindspring.com

To: dalcorn@erols.com; david.wrone@uwsp.edu; bbrody@mindspring.com; jerrycatchall@comcast.net

Reply to: jlesar@mindspring.com

----- Original Message -----

From: Peter Scott**To:** Max Holland**Cc:** PaulHoch@Berkeley.edu; PaulHoch@Cal.Berkeley.edu; john.mcadams@marquette.edu; blackburst@aol.com; KaiserD2@gmail.com; prl5720@aol.com; dlifton@earthlink.net; morleyj@gmail.com; gerald@posner.com; dreitzes@aol.com; shinleyj@yahoo.com; david@talbotplayers.com; lamarwaldron@yahoo.com; G.R.Blakey.1@nd.edu; gmack@jfk.org; odellm@comcast.net; absmrss@eircom.net; ZaidMS@aol.com; mark_allen64@yahoo.com; dalekmyers@comcast.net; twvaughan2005@yahoo.com; haapanen@lcsc.edu; Csanderslaw@aol.com; jlesar@mindspring.com; rexbradford@gmail.com; gum226@sbcglobal.net; dthomas@weslaco.ars.usda.gov; snyder@slac.stanford.edu; stugrad98@aol.com; stevebarber@peoplepc.com; styler232@yahoo.com; jidavison2000@yahoo.com; paulseaton@paulseaton.com; rocandrik@aol.com; cgscally@googlemail.com; pmvmusic@cox.net; Fred.Litwin@gmail.com; mrusshome@yahoo.com; barbifk@comcast.net; defense4212@comcast.net; Patrick@mccarthylaw.us; bsimpich@gmail.com; john.simkin@ntlworld.com**Sent:** 12/12/2009 2:44:04 PM**Subject:** Re: McAdams review of James Douglass's JFK and the Unspeakable

Holding my nose, I feel I have to respond to McAdams' "Unspeakably Awful" (his words) review of James Douglass's *JFK and the Unspeakable*. I will address only his reference to Vietnam in the commentary by John Prados on the newly released White House tapes of August 1963 discussing

Vietnam (<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB302/index.htm>).

Prados is a genuine scholar, and what he wrote in commentary is worth reading by all of us. But I have already written to him to question the assumption he makes (and is flaunted flagrantly in McAdams' review): namely, that what Kennedy said in August about the purpose of withdrawing troops from Vietnam reveals what he must have been thinking when, in NSAM 263 of October 11, 1963, he authorized an initial withdrawal of 1000 troops by the end of 1963.

Indeed Prados's analysis of the August discussion, if correct, must be taken as evidence that JFK's purpose for a troop withdrawal had *changed* between August, when it was discussed as what Prados calls a mechanism "to influence the Diem government," and October, when it was demonstrably authorized to be implemented *without advising or alerting the Diem government*.

I tried yesterday to point this out tactfully to Prados, a scholar whom I respect, in the following email (I have not yet heard back from him):

Dear John Prados,

I read with interest your account of the newly released audio recordings of White House discussions on Vietnam in August 1963 (<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB302/index.htm>). However I am not convinced that what Kennedy said about withdrawal in August can tell us what he had in mind when authorizing NSAM 263 in October. Such an extrapolation would assume that his thinking had not changed through those seven tumultuous weeks.

It seems to me that you do make this extrapolation in the following paragraphs

Finally, the new Kennedy tapes further illuminate the debate as to whether John F. Kennedy intended to withdraw the United States from the Vietnam war. The record of the August meetings shows President Kennedy's acute awareness of the political capital he would lose in Congress if the Vietnam war were lost (**Item 12**). In the meetings Kennedy and his advisers use the term "withdrawal" mostly to signify termination or suspension of aid to the Diem government. They explicitly use "evacuation" in conversations about getting Americans out of South Vietnam in the context of a coup situation, and a plan for such an evacuation was discussed and refined during this period. Kennedy and his advisers were reaching for mechanisms to influence the Diem government, and they would, as noted, terminate aid to some of Diem's troops. South Vietnamese officials, specifically including Nhu, made public statements at this time that hinted at a future demand for the Americans to leave Vietnam. The minor withdrawal that President Kennedy approved and which Secretary McNamara ordered in October 1963 should be seen in this context: it was a measure that simultaneously suggested that Washington could be responsive to demands by the Diem government, simplified U.S. problems in case an evacuation actually needed to be carried out, and put Diem further on notice that the United States had the power to leave him in the lurch.

(<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB302/index.htm>)

And I think you are demonstrably wrong in the last sentence, when you claim

that

The minor withdrawal that President Kennedy approved and which Secretary McNamara ordered in October 1963 should be seen in this context: it was a measure that □ put Diem further on notice that the United States had the power to leave him in the lurch.

It couldn't have put Diem on notice, because NSAM 263 explicitly directed there be no formal announcement of the withdrawal; and indeed there was none until after Diem was dead. This directive of secrecy applied to the withdrawal alone, in explicit contrast (as Newman, Galbraith, and I have pointed out) to the Taylor-McNamara proposals for economic and financial sanctions, which were indeed publicized and indeed served as a message to Diem.

This is what I have to say (with footnotes) on this matter, in *The War Conspiracy*, pp. 290-91:

- 1) Kennedy did unambiguously order on October 5 1963 that 1000 U.S. troops be withdrawn from Vietnam by the end of December 1963. This was a decision, unlike the intention announced on October 2, as can be seen from a memo of the October 5 meeting:

The President also said that our decision to remove 1,000 U.S. advisors by December of this year should not be raised formally with Diem. Instead the action should be carried out routinely as part of our general posture of withdrawing people when they are no longer needed.

This language was repeated in National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM) 263 of October 11, 1963:

The President approved the military recommendations contained in section I B (1-3) of the [McNamara-Taylor] report, but directed that no formal announcement be made of the implementation of plans to withdraw 1,000 U.S. military personnel by the end of 1963.

The debate over the significance of this decision has not abated, but it has changed. The significance of the decision is still minimized by historians like Kai Bird, who now argue that it was no more than a temporary tactic to put pressure on Diem. There were indeed some advisers at the time who saw the threat of withdrawal as a means to pressure Diem. But in the McNamara-Taylor Report of October 2 and the ensuing NSAM 263 of October 11, the withdrawal plan was separated from the political program of economic and financial sanctions. As John Newman and James Galbraith have pointed out, the withdrawal decision was to be kept secret, while the other sanctions were to be publicized, showing clearly that □Kennedy did not want Diem or anyone else to interpret the withdrawal as part of any pressure tactic (other steps that were pressure tactics had also been approved). □

Howard Jones concludes that the withdrawal decision in NSAM 263 embodied a policy that changed with Johnson's succession to the presidency:

As the presidential tapes show, McNamara urged President Kennedy as late as October 2, 1963, to pursue the withdrawal plan as □a way to get out of Vietnam. □ Kennedy's assassination brought the process to a halt.

I would be interested in your reaction to these comments.

Peter

On Dec 11, 2009, at 4:46 PM, Max Holland wrote:

John McAdams on James Douglass's JFK AND THE UNSPEAKABLE:

<http://www.washingtondecoded.com/site/2009/12/unspeakably-awful.html>

www.washingtondecoded.com/

----- Original Message -----

From: "Paul Hoch" <PaulHoch@Berkeley.edu>

To: "(JFK Group by cc)" <PaulHoch@Cal.Berkeley.edu>

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Subject: What is the asterisk in NY 3245-S*? And larger FPCC-FBI-CIA issues
Date: Fri, 11 Dec 2009 16:18:24 -0800

Group -

Can anyone explain the meaning of the asterisk in the FBI's identification of "NY 3245-S*", a security informant who provided information on the FPCC?

I have a totally unreliable vague recollection that the asterisk may designate a particularly sensitive source: not a person acting as an informant, but a surveillance operation: a black bag job, bug, wiretap, or the like.

Official documentation would be best, but I would be interested in any interpretation you offer.

.John, does Athan Theoharis still have an office down the hall from you?

If my memory is not totally false, the explanation of the * probably originated in something he wrote.

Or, perhaps, David Garrow's book, "The FBI and Martin Luther King, Jr.: From 'Scl'o' to Mcmphis."

More generally, I wonder if Prof. Theoharis has any unpublished analysis of, or records about, the FPCC or FBI-CIA operations against it.

Perhaps he has some government documents which he would share with MaryFerrell.org.

Also, many of us would be interested in any comments Theoharis might have:

About Bill Simpich's recent analyses:

<http://www.maryferrell.org/mffweb/archive/viewer/showDoc.do?mode=searchResult&docId=145508>

(i.e. <http://www.opednews.com/articles/THE-JFK-CASE--WHAT-INFORM-by-Bill-Simpich-091124-246.html>)

"The JFK Case: What Informants are Still Out There?"

<http://www.maryferrell.org/mffweb/archive/viewer/showDoc.do?mode=searchResult&docId=145223>

(i.e. <http://www.counterpunch.org/simpich07242009.html>)

"Fair Play for Cuba and the Cuban Revolution"

Or about Jeff Morley's analysis of the Joannides story and the DRE:
http://www.maryferrell.org/wiki/index.php/Episode_1_-_Morley_V._CIA (many links)

I am querying the group because Bill Simpich has written about NY 3245-S*. He is confident that NY 3245-S* is a reference to Victor Vicente.

Bill has established that Vicente was a significant source, within the FPCC, for both the FBI and the CIA.

His name is redacted in paragraph 2 of this particular copy of a 10 Jul 63 CIA memo:

<http://www.maryferrell.org/mffweb/archive/viewer/showDoc.do?docId=18176&relPagId=2>

NY 3245-S* repeatedly provided the FBI with documents from FPCC headquarters (including Oswald material). For example, see

<http://www.maryferrell.org/mffweb/archive/viewer/showDoc.do?docId=85891&relPagId=2> (21 Apr 63)

<http://www.maryferrell.org/mffweb/archive/viewer/showDoc.do?docId=135033&relPagId=2> (27 Oct 63)

<http://www.maryferrell.org/mffweb/archive/viewer/showDoc.do?mode=searchResult&absPagId=1263752>

My tentative reading is that NY 3245-S* refers to a series of surreptitious entries.

Among other clues: on the internal cover page, NY 3245-S* is sometime referred to as "anonymous" and not linked to a specific informant file (134-xxxx), unlike other NY nnn-S informants. Also, I have not run across any reference to information from NY 3245-S* other than documents which could have been photographed surreptitiously. And the sensitivity of NY 3245-S* is often mentioned, in very careful language, more than I would expect for any person, even a sensitive source.

(In his Counterpunch article, Bill refers to Theoharis' expertise on FBI black bag jobs. He has cited Newman, 'Oswald and the CIA', page 304, which refers to Theoharis and Cox, "The Boss," pp. 14-15 and note 49, which refers to several documents about eight FPCC black-bag jobs.)

I have no evidence against Bill's belief that Vicente facilitated these entries.

(But I have seen no evidence that he personally provided or photographed the records).

So is there any significance to my interpretation?

Mainly, it would mean that we have two interesting source to consider, not just one.

Presumably, Vicente had an ordinary (non-asterisked) informant number, and an associated 134 file.

In my surfing starting with the references to '3245' on MaryFerrell.org, I noticed (but unfortunately did not save) a cover page which referred to someone as NY [redacted]-S *and* CIA T18 (or something like that), with a 134-[redacted] file reference.

That is how I would expect Vicente to be described.

I have not gone deeply into Bill's analysis, much less the documents he links to or related ones on MaryFerrell.org. My retirement has not yet generated much spare time.

I am interested in Bill's work for several reasons, starting with our interest in the Corliss Lamont pamphlet.

My FOIA queries long ago, which eventually established that the copy Oswald gave to SA Quigley did have the 544 Camp address, earned me a "blue gem" from J. Edgar himself, calling me a "smear artist":

<http://www.maryferrell.org/mffweb/archive/viewer/showDoc.do?docId=60408&relPageId=105>

That characterization made a nice T-shirt for my infant daughter, and has come in handy as a rebuttal to some people who think of me as a long-time "Warren loyalist."

More substantially, this interests me because the FBI-FPCC material may cast a light on the Joannides mystery.

(Which I consider as shorthand for the "Joannides-DRE-Odio-Masen-Nonte-Whitter/Miller and maybe even Elrod" mystery.)

Bill pointed me to documents about the CIA's known interest, in September 1963, in discrediting the FPCC:

<http://www.maryferrell.org/mffweb/archive/viewer/showDoc.do?docId=12654&relPageId=2>

<http://www.maryferrell.org/mffweb/archive/viewer/showDoc.do?docId=30097&relPageId=2>

The "FBI - HSCA Subject File: FPCC" is on-line:

<http://www.maryferrell.org/mffweb/archive/docset/getList.do?docSetId=1458>

That looks like essential reading for an understanding of the context of Oswald's contacts with the FPCC.

It is a lot to read (239 documents, some large). "I would if I could, but I am not able."

Finally:

MaryFerrell.org has added a new level of membership, for \$100 rather than \$40 per year:

http://www.maryferrell.org/wiki/index.php/Featured_PDF_Downloads_and_Pro_Memberships

\$100 per month is certainly a bargain for this indispensable resource (even though I don't anticipate using the bonus feature, unlimited downloads of PDFs with access to the OCRd text.)

Things would have been different back in the sixties and seventies if we had that kind of search capability.

Or, for that matter, if the Warren Commission or the HSCA had the access and search tools we all have now.

Paul

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[http://thirdpartyoffers.juno.com/TGL2141/c?](http://thirdpartyoffers.juno.com/TGL2141/c?cp=0Du4FYTpN5V4m0MIWBoR9gAAJ1B6h7fYQp5M-J5A98E7w5uFAAYAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAADNAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAATRAAAAAA=)

[cp=0Du4FYTpN5V4m0MIWBoR9gAAJ1B6h7fYQp5M-](http://thirdpartyoffers.juno.com/TGL2141/c?cp=0Du4FYTpN5V4m0MIWBoR9gAAJ1B6h7fYQp5M-J5A98E7w5uFAAYAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAADNAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAATRAAAAAA=)

[J5A98E7w5uFAAYAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAADNAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAATRAAAAAA=](http://thirdpartyoffers.juno.com/TGL2141/c?cp=0Du4FYTpN5V4m0MIWBoR9gAAJ1B6h7fYQp5M-J5A98E7w5uFAAYAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAADNAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAATRAAAAAA=)

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