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December 26, 1979

Dean James A. Thurber
School of Government and Public
Administration
American University
Washington, D.C.

Dear Dean Thurber:

Beginning with the assassination of John Kennedy in 1963, and spurred by the subsequent murders of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, a number of professional people have banded together in an attempt specifically to "solve" the cases and generally to understand better the causes of political violence in our country and abroad in the late 20th Century.

Although there were some other valuable groups, the two most active ones were the Committee to Investigate Assassinations (CTIA) of which I am Executive Director, and the Assassination Information Bureau (AIB). The CTIA was instrumental in persuading the House of Representatives to establish its Special Committee on Assassinations; whereas the AIB was most active in assisting that Committee during its tenuous hold on life. Several key staff members of the House Committee were drawn from our ranks.

As you know, the House Committee concluded it is probable that there were conspiracies in both the JFK and MLK cases, but that they do not know the identity of the conspirators or the forces which motivated them. They did not study the RFK murder or the attempt on the life of George Wallace.

In our view, this is an exceedingly bad posture in which to leave these cases, but this is where they repose.

There are a number of able people who wish to continue down the road to the end, but after twelve years both CTIA and AIB are in great need of reorganization and consolidation. A number of us have massive libraries, extensive files, and a considerable burden of material in our heads.

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It is our present thinking that we would like to organize as many of the reliable people as possible into a single academically-oriented organization -- with permanence and a repository for our libraries and files. We are also interested in conducting seminars and publishing scholarly articles through a university press. Tentatively, we have thought of calling it the Institute on Political Violence.

For a number of reasons we have concluded that, if possible, we should associate with an institution in the general vicinity of Washington. We know that such an arrangement would be of great help to us; we like to think that we could make a contribution to a college or university.

I would like very much to come and talk with you about the possibility of our associating with your (or another) institution. My secretary will be calling to see if you are willing to give me a few minutes of your time and, if so, to arrange a mutually convenient date.

With best regards.

Sincerely yours,


Bernard Fensterwald, Jr.

BF/is