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BERNARD FENSTERWALD, JR.

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Dear Congressman:

One year ago, few of us would have believed "Watergate" or Agnew, for that matter.

That was one year ago. Americans had a "credibility level" -- or should it be "incredulity level" -- below which they refused to look, to question. The American political system, as corrupt as it might be, could never be thought to encompass political murder. Other countries (particularly Latin countries) could have political assassinations for political reasons, but not the United States; somehow we were above such things. Hence, the "lone nut" theory. "Show me the murder of an American politician, and I'll show you a demented loner."

After JFK's murder, many people suspected LBJ of having a hand in the deed. However, the suspicions were muted, rarely articulated; and a decade of investigation has not unearthed a scintilla of evidence to implicate him in any manner.

The Dallas murder set the stage for the election of 1964. Then the murder of RFK in 1968 removed the strongest Democratic contender from that election. More recently, the assassination attempt upon Governor Wallace and the dirty tricks played on Senator Muskie assured a second term for the incumbent in the election of 1972.

You may not have seen the attached article by Gore Vidal in the Christmas issue of the New York Review. In it, the author examines very carefully the quagmire which lies beneath the Americans' normal level of credibility. It asks the most pointed questions about our most recent and most horrible decade of assassinations, a decade in which three straight national elections were decided by bullets, not by ballots.

Gore Vidal ends his article on this note:

"Want to assassinate a rival? Then how about the Dallas scenario? One slips into reverie. Why

not set up Bremer as a crazy who wants to shoot Nixon (that will avert suspicion)? But have him fail to kill Nixon just as Oswald was said to have failed to kill his first target General Walker. In midstream have Bremer like Oswald shift to a different quarry. To the real quarry. Make Bremer, unlike Oswald, apolitical. Too heavy an identification with the Democrats might backfire. Then oh, genius! let's help him to write a diary to get the story across.

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"The White House's reaction to the Watergate burglary was the first clue that something terrible has gone wrong with us. The elaborate and disastrous cover-up was out of all proportion to what was, in effect, a small crime the Administration could have lived with. I suspect that our rulers' state of panic came from the fear that other horrors would come to light -- as indeed they have. But have the horrors ceased? Is there something that our rulers know that we don't? Is it possible that during the dark night of our empire's defeat in Cuba and Asia the American story shifted from cheerful familiar farce to Jacobean tragedy -- to murder, chaos?"

Remarkably, there does not seem to be a single word of comment anywhere on this most provocative article, by a well-established author, and in one of our most credible journals. No angry denials. No denunciations. No cries of foul. No nothing.

Why? Because it sinks below what we even like to contemplate?

I hope that you will take the considerable time necessary to read the article in its entirety. And, if it raises doubts in your mind, possibly you will send it to Congressman Rodino with a suggestion that his staff take a good, hard look at the possibility that the Watergate cover-up was and is more than a cover-up of a "third-rate burglary." Maybe we have still seen only the tip of the iceberg.

Sincerely yours,



Bernard Fensterwald, Jr.

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Attachment