SILENCING THE WATCHDOG

The bluntest instrument of governmental manipulation of the press is suppression. It is also the most effective, since it is largely invisible. How is the reader or voter to notice that the watchdog did not bark in the night?

The most common way for a government to suppress some unwelcome piece of news is to classify it secret, but there is always the odd chance that it will leak out anyway and then the exposure is made doubly embarrassing and sensational by the classified stamp. But there are more elegant and effective ways for the government to keep its actions concealed, including the use of the Old Boy Network, calling on a newspaper's- sense of patriotism, or assassinating the character of a nosy reporter.

Character assassination was the principal device used by the Eisenhower administration in 1954 to silence a pesky reporter, but that technique succeeded only because old friendships among like-minded members of the American establishment could be used to sway the the judgement of a major newspaper. The example is used not because it was unique, but because the mentality of both sides during the U.S.-backed overthrow of a Central American government was the way business was frequently conducted.

Until the 1960s, United Fruit Co. was so much a part of the bone and muscle of Central America that nations like Guatemala were company countries, in the same way that Butte, Montana was a company town for Anaconda Copper. In the Third World, companies like United Fruit were synonymous with the United States,

especially during the business-minded Eisenhower administration, which saw little difference between the fortunes of General Motors (or United Fruit) and the national interest.

It was not a trivial thing, therefore, when Jacobo Arbenz Guzman, duly elected in 1951 as president of Guatemala, soon afterwards nationalized large tracts of banana trees belonging to United Fruit. The nationalization by a left-wing leader was a direct challenge to the three basic U.S. goals in Latin America as laid out in a secret National Security Council directive of August 18, 1954: the protection of U.S. access to essential raw materials, the reduction and elimination of the menace of "internal communist or other anti-U.S. subversion," and the promotion of export-oriented capitalism.

The Guatemalan affront was especially offensive to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles (who also had business connections to United Fruit, as did several other key members of the administration). Its timing was also unfortunate. There was the recent U.S. anguish over the ambiguous, unpopular outcome of the war in Korea and the recent news that the French, who had been fighting a rearguard colonial war in Indochina, had finally been defeated by a bunch of ill-equipped Vietnamese at a jungle clearing called Dien Bien Phu. When the French withdrew from Asia in humiliation and with them they took with them some of the suppositions of western pre-eminence that underlay the U.S. position in Central America.

Arbenz was not one of history's towering figures. The U.S. National Security staff. in its analysis, probably correct in

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describing him as "essentially an opportunist whose politics are largely a matter of historical accident." But he was a democratically elected opportunist who had the bad luck and judgement of trying to defy an important symbol of American power in Central America when that power was being challenged in Asia.

Some of the indignation and premonitions that were circulating through the U.S. government can be recaptured in the National Intelligence Estimate of March 11, 1952:

"Future political developments will depend in large measure on the outcome of the conflict between Guatemala and the United Fruit Company. This conflict is a natural consequence of the Revolution of 1944(in Guatemala), but has been exacerbated by the Communists for their own purposes.

"If the (United Fruit) Company should submit to Guatemalan demands, the political position of the Arbenz administration would be greatly strengthened. It is probable that in this case the Government and the unions, under Communist influence and supported by national sentiment, would exert increasing pressure on other U.S. interests."

And so he had to go; not because bananas are important but because he represented a symbolic challenge to the United States of America through his disrespect for a corporation which was a symbol and extension of American power and influence then under attack elsewhere.

Accordingly, under the direct marching orders of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and his brother, Allen, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, the United States began an overt and

covert campaign against the Arbenz government, accusing it of becoming a depot for the import of Communist arms and even a direct threat to the freedom of passage through the Panama Canal. The overt campaign involved public warnings, the withholding of military and economic assistance and a naval blockade to prevent the further arrival of military equipment from Eastern Europe.

The covert campaign, under the direction of the Central Intelligence Agency, was more to the point.

For two years, the United States supported a "liberation army" of exiled Guatemalan military officers led by former Col. Carlos Castillo Armas in Honduras. A massive U.S. propaganda effort attempted to spread panic inside Guatemala and there was barely concealed U.S. support in the form of transport and training and attack bombers, flown by North American pilots. It was a model of coordination neatness and efficiency (involving only some 150 Americans and "liberationists").

Yet, there was one problem with the U.S. operation in Guatemala in 1954. The problem was Sidney Gruson, an Irish-born New York Times correspondent based in Mexico City who had begun filing dispatches from Honduras on the lightly concealed U.S. training and air support. This gave the lie to the polite fiction that the Castillo forces were a self-supporting, indigenous force of Guatemalan patriots who were driven only by a desire to rid their country of foreign communist influence.

In a White House National Security Council meeting on May 27, 1954, just before the Castillo "liberationists" were scheduled to cross the border from Honduras, John Foster Dulles brought up the

painful subject of Gruson's reporting.

According to the recently declassified notes of the meeting, "Secretary Dulles then expressed very great concern about the Communist line being followed by Sidney Gruson in his dispatches to the New York Times. Gruson, thought Secretary Dulles, was a very dangerous character, and his reporting had done a great deal of harm."

President Eisenhower chimed in, saying he "often felt that the New York Times was the most untrustworthy newspaper in the United States." The Director of the CIA, Allen Dulles, then "pointed out some very disturbing features of Sidney Gruson's career to date." (The National Security Council memo doesn't say what those disturbing features were. Gruson had begun as a Times copy aide and moved up to war correspondent in World War Two. After Mexico City in the 1950s, he and his then-wife, Flora Lewis, then of the Washington Post, moved to Poland, Germany and England where he broke a number of major stories. Gruson announced his retirement from The Times at the age of 70 in 1986 when he ended his journalistic career full of honors as vice-chairman of The New York Times Company.)

Attorney General Herbert Brownell, Jr. proposed a solution to the other 21 men at the 1954 NSC meeting. "Would it not be a good idea for someone to talk informally to the management of the New York Times?" Adm. Lewis Strauss, special assistant to the president, volunteered that he would be glad to talk to Times publisher Arthur Sulzberger. Eisenhower said he had no objection but glumly added, according to the meeting notes, "that he didn't

think anything useful would come out it."

The president was much too pessimistic. Strauss had his little chat with Sulzberger. Gruson, who did not know about the high level conversations in Washington and New York, found himself summarily sent back to Mexico City without explanation on the eve of the U.S.-sponsored invasion.

The Times reporting about the coming U.S.-supported invasion and bombing of Guatemala dropped off and the tenor of the stories became markedly more congenial to the administration. Dulles noted a few days later that the American press, notably The Times, had finally become aware of the danger to the hemisphere of Communist arms shipments. The headline in The Times two days before the U.S.- financed and backed overthrow of the democratically elected government of Guatemala was: "Dulles Sees Peril to Panama Canal."

The invasion proceeded as planned in Washington, without the nuisance of Gruson's reporting. Guatemala, as expected, did fall to the invading army officers, operating under the cover of the American air power. The victorious officers began a bloody purge of Arbenz's "fellow travelers" from the army, thousands of whom "disappeared." The new leader disbanded the political parties as well as the labor unions that had been such an annoyance to the United Fruit Co. plantation managers. Despite strong U.S. financial and political support, Castillo himself proved unable to control the tiger he had mounted and was assassinated by his palace guards in 1957, beginning a whole new cycle of right-wing, frequently brutal regimes in Guatemala.

John Foster Dulles still was not pleased with Gruson.

According to a memorandum of his conversation with the Mexican foreign minister three months later, Dulles "deplored some trouble-making articles written by Sidney Gruson of the New York Times and said that he had often thought of asking The Times to substitute someone else to cover their Latin American relations. " Whether by coincidence or not, Gruson was transferred by The Times a few months later to Europe. Pax Americana had returned to Central America. Although it was probably not pivotal, the willing silence of a great American newspaper had played an accomplice's role.

The scene had been set for an even more ambitious U.S. expedition, this one in Cuba, but also involving the acquiescence, by silence, of The Times -- the Bay of Pigs misadventure. If the nationalization of the banana plantations in Guatemala was an affront, then events in Cuba in 1959 were an outrage to the American government. An island on the American continental shelf was in the process of becoming a Soviet satellite, a ragtag band of bearded leftists turning an American resort into a strategic challenge. It did not require a Walter Lippmann to guess that the Eisenhower administration -- especially given the cheap success in Guatemala in 1954 -- was going to try to excise this Cuban blemish from the hemispheric horizon. The plans for intervening in Cuba were well underway when John F. Kennedy took over from Eisenhower. Although they disagreed on many things, the outgoing soldier-president agreed with the incoming young politician that Castro would have to go. Plans laid during the Eisenhower administration were continued and accelerated in the

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new Kennedy White House.

This was not a secret to the Cuban government which was well represented in the polyglot Cuban emigre community in the United States. Fidel Castro later said that the chief problem his intelligence services faced in 1959 and 1960 was the sheer quantity of information about the CIA-backed groups establishing the organization for a full-scale invasion.

But American newspaper readers did not know about the CIA's operations as the H-hour for the invasion approached, even though several energetic reporters had dug out the essential details nearly a year earlier. At the crucial moment, the Kennedy administration successfully convinced the editors of major publications that their highest duty was to follow their politically elected president's recommendations and not their journalistic instincts.

In August, 1960, some American youngsters had thrown some firecrackers at a Cuban training camp at Homestead near Miami and were shot by the Cubans, who came boiling out of their barracks, believing that they were under attack from Castro followers. The Miami Herald began to look into the bizarre incident. Its Washington correspondent, David Kraslow, spent a few weeks nosing around and came up with a 1,500-word account that had all the basic elements of the story: The CIA had organized the training for an invasion of Cuba, over the objections of the State Department and the Justice Department, which were pressuring President Eisenhower to move the operations out of the United States, to avoid further violations of the Neutrality Act.

The editors of the Herald were stunned by the results of their own correspondent's digging. Agonizing over the national security implications, they tried desperately to get some sort of guidance from the U.S. government, including the White House. Nothing. Kraslow and his bureau chief went to Allen Dulles at the CIA. Without directly confirming the information, Dulles told the newspaper that printing the article "would be most harmful to the national interest." The editors and even Kraslow did not question that judgement and the article was was spiked.

On November, 19, 1960, The Nation magazine published an article under the title, "Are We Training Cuban Guerrillas?" The editorial, quoting a Guatemalan newspaper and unnamed sources, said that the Central Intelligence Agency had acquired a large tract of land in Guatemala, stoutly fenced and heavily guarded, which was being used as a training ground for Cuban counter-revolutionaries who were preparing for an eventual landing in Cuba. U.S. personnel and equipment were present at the secluded base, the article said.

The reports were of such intense interest in Guatemala, which itself had been the object of U.S. attentions six years earlier, that the nation's president had gone on his country's television to admit the existence of the base, but refused to discuss its purpose. The Nation, with its slender resources, was in no position to finance an investigation but it ended its editorial with a call to all U.S. news media with correspondents in Guatemala to check it out.

A reader of The Nation wrote to The New York Times asking

whether the allegations in the magazine were true, and if so, why The Times had not been doing something about it. That sounded like a reasonable question to Clifton Daniel, the assistant managing editor, who asked his foreign desk to check it out. One month previously, without knowing of the CIA plans, he had said at a seminar on journalism, "Some people might argue that newspapers should not print facts that might embarrass our government in its relations with other governments. But it may be those very facts are the ones our people need to know in order to come to clear decisions about our policy."

(Daniel, deeply troubled by his newspaper's role, gave the most authoritative narrative of the episode in a little-noted speech five years later at a World Press Institute meeting in Minnesota. This account draws on that speech, as well as other public records and documents.)

That same month The Times sent Paul Kennedy, correspondent in Central America for The Times, to Guatemala. In what should have been a sign to the organizers about the efficiency of their operation and the security around it, Kennedy managed to penetrate two miles inside the perimeter. Two months after The Nation editorial had appeared, on January 10, 1961, The Times carried Paul Kennedy's article, which reported that there was intensive air training and that anti-Cuban commando forces were being drilled by foreign personnel, mainly American.

In addition to the Guatemalan training site, there was a more comfortable headquarters at the deactivated U.S. Navy base at Opa-Locka, Florida, run by a couple of CIA field operators,

including the urbane, witty E. Howard Hunt, later to become well-known for another operation in Washington. With such flamboyant men in charge, the operation quickly became an item on the Washington cocktail circuit. When David Atlee Phillips was recruited by the CIA to handle the propaganda for a secret operation, his new superior gave him three guesses about the nature of the project. Phillips replied, "Cuba. Cuba. And Cuba."

Phillips requisitioned a U.S. Army radio transmitter and created a Spanish-language "exile" radio station, Radio Swan, which was on the air to Cuba within a month. The Cubans knew that the radio station, transmitting from a tiny island off Honduras, was U.S.-supported and that it represented a larger project. So did anybody who listened to it. As a result, Phillips was asked to make it sound "less American," so he took the rugs off the floor of the studio and added some other rough edges which would give the station's broadcasts a cheap, unfinished sound.

Any reporter with curiosity and a knowledge of Spanish who passed through Miami could hardly miss the signs that something big was up. The New Republic, another magazine with sparse resources, received a piece by Karl Meyer, then an editorial writer for The Washington Post who had travelled to Cuba and had interviewed Fidel Castro. It is an interesting commentary on The Post's limited sense of journalistic responsibility and independence at that time that Meyer did not try to use his own newspaper for the revelation, but chose The New Republic, instead, to sound the alarm. Entitled "Our Men in Miami," Meyer's piece was described by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., then a

presidential adviser, as "a careful, accurate and devastating account of CIA activities among the refugees."

President Kennedy was shown galleys of the Meyer article and expressed the hope that it could be stopped. The editor of the magazine, Gilbert Harrison, accepted the suggestion without question, according to Schlesinger, "a patriotic act which left me oddly uncomfortable."

Tad Szulc, a New York Times reporter with both curiosity and good contacts in the Cuban community, passed through Miami from Rio december Janeiro and discovered that an invasion force was in its final stages of formation. He requested permission to investigate and quickly decided that a group of such size and resources could only be financed and directed by the CIA.

In early April he filed a long dispatch to The Times which began:

"For nearly nine months Cuban exile military forces dedicated to the overthrow of premier Fidel Castro have been training in the United States as well as in Central America.

"An army of 5,000 to 6,000 men constitutes the external fighting arm of the anti-Castro Revolutionary Council, which was formed in the United States last month. Its purpose is the liberation of Cuba from what it describes as the Communist rule of the Castro regime."

The article, more than two columns long, was scheduled to lead the paper on Friday, April 7, 1961 under a four-column headline. But Orvil Dryfoos, the publisher, was troubled by the security implications and further anguished over the possibility

that if the invasion failed, The Times would be blamed. He discussed it with Turner Catledge, managing editor of The Times, and it was decided that they would consult with James Reston, Washington correspondent for the newspaper.

Reston advised against running anything that would pinpoint the planned timing of the invasion (On April 7, Szulc had described the invasion which took place as planned in the early hours of April 15, as "imminent." Nothing more specific than that.) Szulc recalls, "A decision was made in New York not to mention the CIA's part in the invasion preparations and not to use the date of the invasion."

Over the passionate objections of some of The Times' editors, the Szulc story was toned down and the four-column headline became a one-column head lower on the page, a kind of newspaper body-language which suggested that the story was not a major one. Ironically, although the imminence of the invasion was deleted from Szulc's story, the newspaper added a shirttail article, quoting a CBS broadcast saying that the invasion preparations were in their final stages. But that did not have the majestic authority of the The Times' own dispatch and was largely ignored.

Szulc later reported in his book, "Fidel" that the Cuban intelligence services had functioned with perfection. Interior Minister Ramiro Valdes told Szulc, "We knew who everybody was, what weapons they carried, how much ammunition they had, where they were going to be, how many of them, at what time, and what they proposed to do....We were very seriously infiltrated in the counterrevolutionary bands."

After the Bay of Pigs invasion had failed, President Kennedy himself was curiously ambiguous about the suppression of information. Some two weeks after the fiasco, speaking to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Kennedy had suggested that newspapers "re-examine their own responsibilities...Every newspaper now asks itself with respect to every story, 'Is it news?' All I suggest is that you add the question: 'Is it in the interest of national security?'"

Speaking to a smaller group of the editors in the White House, Kennedy went down a list of what he considered to be breaches of security, with many of the examples taken from The Times, including Paul Kennedy's original dispatch in January. Catledge of The Times pointed out that the same information Paul Kennedy had reported had appeared in the Guatemalan newspaper La Hora and was thus presumably available to the Cubans and anybody else who read the Spanish language. The president replied, "Yes, but it was not news until it appeared in The Times."

But then, at the same meeting, Kennedy pulled Catledge aside and told him, "If you had printed more about the operation you would have saved us from a colossal mistake." A year later he told Dryfoos, "I wish you had run everything on Cuba...I am just sorry you didn't tell it at the time."

The same internal anguish continued at the newspaper itself, with Daniel believing that the publication of the specific information would have resulted in the cancellation of the operation, saving the country an enormous setback. His argument was that a newspaper has a duty "to keep the public informed on

matters vitally affecting our national honor and prestige, not to mention our national security."

Reston, who had argued successfully for the suppression of the invasion date, remained convinced that it was the right thing to do, for the country and for the newspaper. He told Daniel, "It is ridiculous to think that publishing the fact that the invasion was imminent would have avoided this disaster. I am quite sure the operation would have gone forward."

If it had, then The Times, according to this argument, would have been responsible -- or at least have been publicly blamed -- for the defeat.

There is an odd postscript to this story, something which should prevent anybody from drawing easy conclusions about journalistic duty and national security.

The Bay of Pigs fiasco in 1961 and the fecklessness of the Kennedy administration led, as such things do, to a more serious challenge, the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. Apparently convinced that Kennedy was a lightweight, Nikita Khruschev made the momentous decision to challenge the young American president by moving land-based, ballistic missiles into Cuba secretly. The discovery by U.S. intelligence of the Soviet plans led to the crisis that brought the world to the edge of nuclear war, an intricate duel of brinksmanship that depended as much on deception, timing and concealment as it did on power.

When Dryfoos died in 1963 President Kennedy wrote to his widow that Dryfoos had helped him twice during the previous two years. One was the withholding of the precise details of the Bay

of Pigs invasion, "the other his decision to refrain from printing on October 21st the news, which only the man for The Times possessed, on the presence of Russian missiles in Cuba."

Kennedy wrote Mrs. Dryfoos, "Upon my informing him that we needed 24 hours more to complete our preparations" Dryfoos withheld the information. As a result of the Bay of Pigs episode Dryfoos had set up a channel of communication which would avoid the sometimes troublesome ethics of the middle-level editors at the newspaper. As Daniel explained it, Dryfoos told the president "when there was a danger of security information getting into print, the thing to do was to call in the publishers and explain matters to them."

Kennedy did exactly that when tipped off that The Times had information that the United States knew the Soviet missiles were emplaced in Cuba. He called Dryfoos and Reston, and told them that if the news about the missiles were published before he revealed the American knowledge "Khruschev could actually give him an ultimatum before he went on the air" to announce the American discovery. The news was withheld, giving the American president the advantage of diplomatic tactical surprise, although it was no secret to the Russians or the Cubans that the Americans knew about the missile emplacements, since they were watching the U-2s fly overhead and, indeed, shot one down at the height of the crisis, on Oct. 27,1962.

But the withholding of the news permitted Kennedy to spring his strategic surprise, and kept the Soviets from making their own announcement, a sequence which could have changed the outcome of

the crisis.

In Washington, in the 1950s and 1960s, the line between those who worked in the establishment and those journalists who were supposed to scrutinize them was even less visible than it is now. Walter Lippmann's relations with eight different administrations went further than news contacts; he went to school with the men who ran the country, spent weekends with them and their families, flirted with their daughters, and finally took the wife of the man who might be the equivalent of the British Archbishop of Canterbury, the editor of "Foreign Affairs."

Arthur Krock, Lippmann's columnist counterpart *The Times*, boasted in his "Memoirs" that he had intimate contact with 12 American presidents.

Richard Bissell, the man who ran the CIA's covert operations including the Bay of Pigs, went to school (Groton, class of '28) with Joseph Alsop, the newspaper columnist, whose brother Stewart, also a columnist, served part of his career as an intelligence officer.

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These men not only looked similar (slim, tall, thinning hair. straight noses), they thought alike. Whether journalists or government officials, they had gone through the same war, often in the same intelligence outfits, or aboard the same ships. And so it shouldn't be surprising that the government men, when they were in trouble, went to their friends in the press, either to leak some pointed information, or to suppress other stories.

It should also not be surprising that the requests were honored. That was how the system operated, involving a sense of

honor, privilege and a shared definition of duty.

It was not only the near-identical views of how to manage the American Century that disposed the two sides to cooperate. There was also the consideration that a favor performed was a social and professional debt. When the journalist side of the friendship needed a favor, the government side responded.

Mostly this was done over lunch, at dinner parties or on tennis courts, and so there is no written record, for example, of the bargain that was made when John Foster Dulles slipped The New York Times the full set of notes from the Yalta Big Four conference which carved up the world into spheres of influence.

But there was a fortunate anomaly which permits us to study how it was done. J. Edgar Hoover, the secretive and egomaniacal director of the FBI, knew how the game was played in Washington, but he didn't have the inside contacts, the feel or the background or even the look. In banquet pictures, he stands out, a bulldog among the Golden Retrievers.

While his arch rival, Allen Dulles, director of the CIA, would be sipping brandy at the clubs, Hoover would be signing memos at his government-issue desk at the FBI. Richard Bissell, Dulles' deputy, would be sailing on Chesapeake Bay with other members of the establishment while Hoover, accompanied by his slavish number two, Clyde Tolson, would be at Laurel race track, making two dollar bets on weekday afternoons.

A fortunate result of Hoover's non-membership in the Washington journalistic-governmental establishment, was that he left a paper trail of his attempts to suppress the press. He was

a fanatical bureaucrat, isolated from most other human contact, and his sycophantic employees communicated with him by means of fawning, detailed memos. Many of these memos survive, and despite heroic efforts by the FBI to keep them hidden, some of them have emerged because of Freedom of Information Act requests. (One of the most industrious FOIA burrowers in the FBI secret stacks is Harold Weisberg, a former Capitol Hill staffer and investigative reporter who lives near Washington in a house where the basement is beginning to look like a government archive. I am indebted to him for some of the following material, which he had procured for his own books, on quite different subjects than this one).

After the immediate shock waves of the John F. Kennedy assassination, there was a second wave, within hours . This one consisted of questions, some of them hostile, about the role of the FBI and other government agencies, including the Secret Service and CIA.

How could Lee Harvey Oswald, a defector and re-defector to the Soviet Union, have escaped the attention of the investigative agencies? How could Jack Ruby have been allowed to be close enough to the arrested prisoner to have killed him? Who were these men, and what was their connection to the U.S. government? New questions rolled in with each newspaper edition, and Hoover's incoming memos reflected the national lack of confidence in the FBI. One memo that Hoover saw described the Dallas office of the FBI as "standing around with pockets open, waiting for the evidence to fall in."

A natural result of this dissatisfaction with the FBI was a groundswell for a new investigative body, a presidential commission. For reasons which are not yet entirely clear and which were no doubt partly due to his own manipulative, conspiratorial character, the new president, Lyndon Johnson, did not want a presidential commission to be appointed. One possibility is that he believed, as he told TV newsman Howard K. Smith four years later, that "Kennedy was trying to get Castro but Castro got to him first." It would not be seemly for the nation at mourning to learn, as Johnson once put it, "We were running a damn Murder Incorporated in the Caribbean."

The reasons are much clearer why J. Edgar Hoover would oppose a hard-hitting presidential commission, apart from the usual bureaucratic reason that it would poach on FBI territory. It was an insult to the Bureau, a slur on its investigative zeal. Hoover also understood that some of the facts which would emerge would expose the FBI's methods and judgements to public scrutiny. His instincts and his bureaucratic skill told him the results would hinder the future work of the Bureau and would not contribute to the historical reputation of the FBI or its director.

His chief fixer around Washington was Cartha De Loach, half lobbyist, half wheeler-dealer who was later the leading public nominee for Bob Woodward's "Deep Throat" source in the Watergate affair. De Loach was Hoover's contact man for the press, the man whom reporters talked to when they wanted inside stuff, which was usually produced complete with a spin that added to the FBI's reputation for omniscience. In the real index of Washington power

-- the number of times a name appears in important Rolodexes -- De Loach was a certified heavyweight.

Just after Jack Ruby had killed Oswald in Dallas, De Loach, at Hoover's instruction, went to see Al Friendly, the erudite and charming managing editor of the Washington Post at 10:50am on Nov. 25, 1963. His mission was to choke off, wherever possible, any movement for an independent investigation into the Kennedy assassination. He reported back to Hoover (through Tolson, since Hoover, like a Chinese emperor, was never approached directly) and his memorandum about the encounter is worth perusing as an example of how business is done in Washington, then and now:

"I told Friendly that I wanted to be perfectly honest with him, however, I must insist that our conversation remain completely off the record. I mentioned we had had numerous cordial arguments in the past and the fact was well established that we usually had different points of view on most matters. I mentioned that the purpose of my call, however, was a matter of grave concern and I felt certain he would recognize the fact. Friendly agreed and stated our conversation would be maintained strictly in confidence.

"I told Friendly that apparently there had been a 'leak' to his paper to the effect that a 'presidential commission' had been suggested to look into the assassination of the president and the murder of Lee Harvey Oswald. I mentioned we had received information indicating his paper planned to prepare an editorial strictly affirming the necessity of a 'presidential commission.' It was mentioned that such an editorial would be most unwise at

The FBI was later to say that the idea for a commission originated with the Daily Worker

the present time.... Friendly affirmed the fact that an editorial was being considered.

"I told Friendly I had just conferred with the director (Hoover) regarding this matter and wanted him to know that such an editorial on the part of his paper would merely 'muddy the waters' and would create further confusion and hysteria. It was mentioned that the president had personally asked the director to have the FBI conduct a full investigation both into the assassination of the president and into the murder of Oswald. I told him Mr. Hoover was personally supervising these investigations and that reports would be submitted to the Department of Justice and to the White House in two phases: (1) the assassination of the president and (2) the murder of Lee Harvey Oswald. I mentioned that Mr. Hoover had seen to it that the best trained men in the FBI were on these investigations and that our inquiries were proving to be swift and intensive. I told him no stone is to be left unturned. I further told him that the president had additionally discussed this matter with the director today and that the director has assured the president that thorough investigations were proceeding at full speed. I mentioned to Friendly that thorough investigations were proceeding at full speed. I mentioned to Friendly that our investigation would include and lay to rest rumors of substance that had been flying around with respect to the two matters. I mentioned to him also the fact that the State of Texas was concerned with the matter and was conducting the inquiry.

"I told Friendly that, as a matter of personal interest to

him, our investigations into the murder of Lee Harvey Oswald would determine the adequacy of security given to Oswald and that the facts, regardless of what they might be, would allow the Department of Justice to determine whether a Civil Rights violation had occurred. Friendly replied he was most interested in this phase."

"I mentioned to Friendly that considering all the above, an editorial in his paper suggesting a 'presidential commission' would merely serve to confuse the issue. I told him it was hoped that he would understand our viewpoint in this matter and would, therefore, eliminate the editorial.

"Without any hesitation, Friendly told me the editorial would be eliminated."

But, then Friendly ran into internal opposition at The Post and called De Loach to say that his superior at the Post, editor Russell Wiggins, later U.S., representative to the United Nations, had wanted to go ahead with the demand for a commission.

De Loach responded with what could be slogan for those in government who try to keep things out of the press. "I told him I was not asking him to suppress anything but merely listen to a point of common sense during a very trying time."

Friendly, according to De Loach's memo, gave some sort of answer about "what might be best for the general public."

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De Loach, Hoover's main contact with the outside world, said that this "is the usual 'hogwash' on the part of Wiggins who cannot be trusted and usually attempts to run opposite good

judgement in order to satisfy his own ego."

(On a later memo about a Post staffer is found the characteristic childish scrawl of Hoover: "He is a typical Washington Post 'fake liberal.'")

The director was content with that operation in a time when nothing else appeared to be going right for the FBI. For the record, he sent back a memorandum later that day to say, "I called Mr. Walter Jenkins (assistant to the President) at the White House and advised him that we had killed the editorial in the Post....He said he would advise President Johnson about it and that the President will be very pleased.".

The Director had done his part in carrying out the orders of the new President. Those administration ideas were summed up best in a memo written the same day that De Loach called on The Post. Written by Deputy Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach, the order was categorical: "The public must be satisfied that Oswald was the assassin; that he did not have confederates who are still at large; and that the evidence was such that he would have been convicted at trial."

would you wonder that LBJ would no publicize, or pressure until he had all answers, as he did announce it 3 days later?

Hoover and Johnson were less pleased when the national groundswell for a commission to investigate the Kennedy killing proved irresistible, although the results of the Warren commission appeared to follow the Katzenbach guidelines about the conclusions to be drawn.

These examples are not meant to show that history was changed by journalistic negligence or co-option. They illustrate how the system operated, and how to continues to operate, when journalists

forget their watchdog function in order to take on the more comfortable role as a sharer in the executive role. But when the journalist cooperates with the politician -- whether out of patriotism or out of a desire to get the inside track on later scoops -- a kind of short-circuit in the democratic process occurs. The confusion of roles means that governmental power is operating without one of the controls that the Constitution insisted on. Infringement of the press can take many forms and one of the most insidious is the voluntary cooperation of journalists in their own silencing.

1-4-87

would you think about adding that representative society needs to be informed to function?