

Leria notes-#3, through Cuba Missile Crisis chapter 3/16/72

His participation in disclosure of the presence of missiles in Cuba adds up to nothing and he places it at a date prior to the installation of any missiles other than what was well known, those surface-to-air missiles of anti-aircraft nature also capable of use against ships, but not the kind the US was later to call "offensive"/

The self-portrait of this man that continues to emerge is of a man who does not know his business. The politics permeate to the informed reader. But it is incredible that he places himself in Havana the new years even that the revolution was over and confesses he didn't know what was going on! He complains to the hotel operator about not being able to get a line to the United States. This is his dialogue:

"But, sir, you don't know?" replied the girl indignantly. "It's the revolution!"
"Revolution? What revolution?" I said stupidly. (278)

It took him several pages to become convinced (281): "When the pistol shot hit the window behind me, I finally believed it was the revolution." I leave it to the Fraziers to determine whether it was a pistol from which the bullet came.

There is all kind of crazy stuff. On 287 he says, "In March 1961 I arrived in Havana transformed into a military camp, with armed militiamen stationed at each street corner behind a pile of sandbags. Castro had launched a new campaign to defend the country against imperialist invaders who, he proclaimed, were ready to ~~occupy~~ land and occupy the island."

But forgetting this, talking of the Bay of Pigs, the next month, in time, he says "but the American people were no more prepared for it than the Cuban people had been for the landing of the Bay of Pigs." To leave no doubt of his own thorough and complete ignorances, superspy had opened this passage from 294 with another of his many dedications of Dulles (Allen): "Then I briefed ^{Allen} Dulles on the situation. He tried to look cheerful but could not convince me that there was still hope. Dulles was a professional man. He knew the politicians had ruined an operation that would have been successful had it been supported by more airpower and a better preparation." If he didn't know all the planning included no American involvement of any overt nature and all the planning was by Dulles, then he is not superspy but supersuperspy. And elsewhere he has a few critical comments on the selection - also by Dulles and the CIA - of the landing place, saying it as the worst possible, that it wouldn't succeed. Of course, this also bears on the editing, which in some places is so terrible it doesn't even have the name of a major division of the CIA, the well-known one he says doesn't exist, the department of dirty tricks, given right. "He calls it and his editor permits it to be called the Division of Plan."

This is the book of the omniscient who occasionally pretends otherwise, as in the above quote, calling himself stupid. He actually presents himself as the one man beside Dulles who was never wrong. His own bosses, even those he likes, or says were great, were all frail and human. I might add also crooks and incompetents.

His stuff on the missiles is so thing (296) that he even says he knew their purpose because of an unconfirmed report that was also quite wrong "that a large hole was being drilled through the ceiling of the cavern to the pasture 50 feet above. This hole had the appearance of a large tube big enough to hold a missile and ~~pointed~~ oriented in the direction of the United States." What is obviously wrong about this to all but superspies is that missiles are launched vertically and then guided to their destinations. And the 50 feet is not deep enough to hide anything or even to hold the damned thing. But he is modest enough on the next page: "I have every reason to think that the intelligence I collected was included in the bulk of information on which the President of the United States based his decision to call the Russians to account. I have had, in private, the thanks of CIA director John McOne." He does not say for this, "intelligence" and if he knows anything of what the President actually said, even if he believed his own rubbish, he knows he was not and could not have been part of that "bulk of information", 100% photographic.

This is a man who is not bright but considers himself brilliant, the lonely genius battling the entire world, save for such indubitable fellow geniuses as Dulles, for whom he reserves his highest praises in every area. He is an insensitive man, as heavy as an Otepka and as dominated by his own backward political views. Although these political beliefs exude from every page, every phrasing and formulation, he is careful not to identify his own political belief, reserving such expressions for explicit or snide comments about others. What this would seem to add up to is that the book is worthless and entirely undependable. This is not what I am saying. What I believe is that it requires the most careful analysis, for it can be and I believe is a work of great value. The problem is deciding what is dependable and what isn't. The decision is not made easier by the schizoid character of the writing, where General de Lattre is at one time a military and diplomatic genius. However, in that area it may be of quintessential value in pinpointing one version of the origins of US involvement in SEAsia and how it was arranged by deLattre and Odell Smith.

The insensitivity and carelessness extends to his own name. When I first became interested in him he was described to me by an old friend of mine, a Frenchman who knew him well, as a stiff shirt, so self-important that he added the "de" to his name to suggest origin in the nobility. Bearing on this, when he quotes others about himself, he never once has anyone referring to him as "de Vosjoli", always "Vosjoli". He never once does this in his references to others.

His commentaries on the art of intelligence are interesting. He says it is not necessary to go in for the cloak-and-dagger stuff, that all one need do is ask the right question of the right guy. This is, of course, true of the desk man. But it is not of the true secret agent, working in the field. The truth is that in the entire book he does not at any point have an illustration of his own functioning as anything but a bureaucrat. I doubt he could have survived a real field operation, and if anything he says of himself and Cuba and the rest of the western hemisphere is true, all of it was open operation with diplomatic standing, hardly the nature of secret intelligence operations. His references to his sources does not in any way diminish this comment.

That so inept and insensitive a man could have been in charge of French counter-intelligence in the western hemisphere is beyond belief, except in terms of their caring nothing for it or having to get him out of Paris so they could function. All he did was talk to the CIA and others, hardly genuine counter-intelligence. He recounts no real exploit, at one, the closest thing being the seeking him out of an Arab diplomat anxious to take some money by treachery.

All of this is entirely consistent with the Farewell America caper, which is as inadequate an operation as can be conceived. It could not possibly have succeeded against any but a garrison. It is not nearly enough to say that Garrison was sized up correctly, for any such operation would have to take into account that someone in his office, someone in his trust, would read and blow the thing, which can't survive the slightest critical analysis. There is nothing to this point bearing directly on whether or not he could have been part of it or in charge of it, but the nature of that game is entirely consistent with his self-characterization, including closeness to the CIA. One point is interesting. Earlier in the book he describes in detail the means of SDBCE for counterfeiting anything, and this in his description extends to the manufacture of the proper kind of paper.

These notes are by no means inclusive. I have marked the book itself at appropriate points. Especially implausibilities and inconsistencies. One of the more interesting elements is in his apparent quest for vengeance, his hatred of his former associates or SDBCE in general. It deals with political assassinations, spelled out, beginning with no such function in the CIA(?). Many Algerians and their associates were assassinated by SDBCE. He glosses over the Ben Barka case. But he says it was done with Gehlen, from before he returned to Germany from Switzerland (Dulles' post during the war, by the way). It would seem that any Gehlen involvement would mean CIA involvement, for he was part of it, his outfit was.