

2/23/71

Dear Harold and Dick,

I have some time now to respond to your recent mailings.

HAROLD: Have done as you asked with Ali. Will get to the Bookstroe soon as possible.

At first your negative comments re first 2 years of JFK administration threw me, for while I knew you felt him to be great by time of death, I had not thought you judged him less than "good" before the "change." This mis-orientation comes mostly from Sorenson, for as I now read Schles, I think I realize something. Sorenson, to me, conveyed the image of JFK as a great Pres all along because he had great ideas and ideals. He wanted to be a strong pres, wanted the gov't to speak with one voice, etc. The welcome detail in Schles, however, makes it increasingly clear, however, that--at least up to what I've read (about mid 1961)--there was a disparity between what he hoped to be and what he was, what he wanted to do and what he was actually doing.

Sorenson seems to indicate a very high degree of innocence for Kennedy re Bay of Pigs, that JFK was backed into a corner from which there was no possible escape, that he had to go ahead with an invasion doomed to fail. Schles is far better on this for he conveys how much JFK was then a victim of his advisers and the "experts" to the point of not listening to himself. I'm just getting into the Berlin thing, but anticipate the same. As for the early 1961 Laos thing, I get the impression that JFK did alright, moving mostly on his own. This from Schles and Wise and Ross.

DICK: Thanks for the Specter stuff. It is nice to know that I was able to see such a thoroughly inaccessible man.

re the situation up in Kingston, I think we've been feeling it here too. A friend just calls it the "February slumps."

Look forward to seeing the revised monograph. I'm especially interested in the wound ballistics source, and would appreciate the copies. What you mention about skull fracturing was told to me, in part, by Fillinger, but it would be great to have a textual reference as well for I would like to back up whatever I use from him with published works as well.

Nothing else, really.

Enclosed is a copy of my 2/19/71 conversation with Specter on the smallest reels I have. If either could rewind onto smaller ones, I'd appreciate return of the reel, for I have no others of that size. Harold's was recorded at 1 and 7/8, Dick's at 3 and 3/4. It was recorded on a stereo machine, but should play on normal mono recorder.

Please--I must ask that this tape be kept confidential. I don't know if it is legal for I did it secretly. Also, I don't want it to get into the wrong hands for it could easily be misused, which I don't want. I really don't want it used at all, but am glad to have proof of what Specter is really like under such questioning.

Must go.

