

Book World - Letters 7/2/73

Cuba and the CIA

READING the Karl E. Meyer review of the books *Bay of Pigs* and *The Brink* [Book World, June 17] left me with a somewhat uneasy feeling. The review for the *Bay of Pigs* was a diatribe about how that episode was a Central Intelligence Agency failure. The review of the second book, *The Brink*, did not mention the CIA.

As a retiree from the CIA, rereading the reviews, the impression grew that Mr. Meyer was using the *Book World* review only as a vehicle to vent his spleen at the CIA faults he perceives, real or imagined. His reference to the CIA following the British pattern in planning the *Bay of Pigs* was an indication. That in fact old OSSers, including Richard Helms, stayed away from it should have been a clue that this was not true. Many of the advisors to the Cubans for that operation were military personnel seconded to the CIA. Others in the agency had long opposed such activities, especially in peacetime, because they were too big to be kept truly secret.

A major tip-off that Mr. Meyer's purpose was to use the review to slam the CIA was the fact that *The Brink* review ignored the CIA contribution as the missile crisis developed. John F. Kennedy acknowledged it, awarding many agency personnel for their contribution to its understanding, and he congratulated the agency for its professionalism.

In summary, as a book review, the essay of Mr. Meyer was a failure. As a demonstration of Mr. Meyer's venom for the CIA, it was a success.

J.E. Dolan
Garrett Park, Maryland

Karl E. Meyer replies:

MR. DOLAN obdurately misses the entire point of my review, which criticized the CIA's poor performance as sponsor of covert "dirty tricks." Of course the agency did well in the 1962 missile crisis, in good part because its role was restricted to aerial intelligence, something we do well. I cannot fathom Mr. Dolan's other complaint since the *Bay of Pigs* bore the special imprimatur of CIA director Allen Dulles, our most Anglophile spy.