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Dear Bud:

Enclosed is my signed declaration of willingness to continue on the CTIA Board of Directors. Naturally this applies to being an "ordinary" Board member, not as Director of Research.

I have given a good deal of thought to the Sprague and Dorland letters to you. Obviously I disagree with them (Sprague's actually infuriates me; Dorland's is just pathetic), yet they have caused me to review much of what has happened over the past four years and to wonder if I have not erred in the past by not speaking out with sufficient emphasis on certain matters. Neither Sprague nor Dorland have any real appreciation of these other problems with the Committee, and the fact that their letters are seriously addressed to such an issue as that you (and I) might be undercover CIA operatives underscores their lack of understanding. Both of them sound ready to join up with Mae Brussell, Guru Skolnick ji, and the flat-earth crowd. Let them. (I think Sprague, clandestinely, already has.)

At some time in the next month or so, I'll try to set down my thoughts about the CTIA and its future in some detail. The main problems that I see are those I have mentioned to you before:

- a) Lack of serious investigative/research work (and of course the funds needed to support it);
- b) Pre-occupation with public relations, which tends to detract from and even conflict with the research aspects;
- c) Bumbling amateurism and lack of self-discipline among some persons (e.g., Sprague himself) who purport to speak for us or who, although not directly identified with us, purport to be experts on the subject;
- d) Lack of an effective staff, and the funds needed to provide it, for doing the grubby, routine stuff that has to be done (and done right) if any organization is to be effective; and, in consequence of all the preceding,
- e) Poor credibility among those media that count, and lack of influence among persons (e.g., Congressmen) or organizations that have any clout. (Sprague and his ilk see all these as part of the cover-up conspiracy, of course.)

The plain fact is that a large part of our credibility problem (the real one, I mean, not this horseshit about the dingbats who think of us as CIA agents) derives from the poor quality of the case that we have made. The Lane/Garrison type of theory simply does not stand scrutiny, and in the early days of the Committee, at least, there is no doubt that we were identified with it. Weisberg's stuff is really no better, and while there has been a sort of eager distance-keeping by mutual consent in respect to Harold, the Washington press corps is well aware of the working association and it has done us no good.

It is Sprague, though, who I think has done the most to make us look like clowns, the more so because he is a seemingly logical and quiet-spoken fellow, very persuasive on early acquaintance and for long afterwards as well. Here I must concede a scoop-point to Harold, who warned me long ago about the wildness of Dick's views. A lot of people have been roped in by the veneer of pseudo-logic and "computer analysis" that Dick manages to cast over his stuff, even when he is telling his audience that there were half a dozen gunmen and 50 conspirators operating in Dealey Plaza. As you know, Dick is also the originator of the theory that some of the Watergate conspirators were in Dealey Plaza (one or another of his "tramps", of course). He has now abandoned that view, I suppose, and in his letter to you he writes as though it originated with someone else writing for the Berkeley Barb. In any case, he does not acknowledge his own parenthood in his letter, and I regard that as a form of cowardice if not actually dishonest. If the dingbats are now calling him a CIA agent (which in fact may be true, although I doubt that anybody is seriously calling him that), it is no more than he deserves.

Dick is also, to a very large extent, responsible for another development that has taken place in the past year and which is or has been causing us some image problems. I refer to this group of half-baked, wet-eared "lecturers" on the Kennedy assassination who are going from campus to campus in the name of the CTIA and proclaiming Sprague's theories about the assassination, the great cover-up conspiracy, and, yes, the Watergate guys in Dealey Plaza. They are booked by some kind of speaker's bureau or ad agency, and they get \$750 per appearance, of which \$500 is kept by the agency. Notwithstanding the huge cut taken by the agency, one of these guys, Bob Katz, is purported to have bookings which will net him \$40,000 by the end of the current speaking season. (I wonder how the idealistic dingbats might view that piece of information.)

In the early days of their campus touring (and maybe still, for all I know), these guys were proclaiming an affiliation with the CTIA. There is no question in my mind that they capitalized on that asserted connection, and when the Committee acquired some national prominence as a result of your representation of McCord,

their attractiveness and marketability as speakers rose accordingly.

I have known this for some time. In the past, it has merely been annoying, and that only because I found it disturbing that these young "truth-seekers" should be so commercial about it, while some older and more battered researchers on the subject (whose work was being utilized by the "truth-seekers") weren't getting a dime. Neither was the CTIA, to my knowledge, although I understood that Bob Saltzman had set up some kind of bank account in the CTIA's name in Schenectady. (What ever happened to that, by the way?)

But now I read in Sprague's letter to you, after his challenge to your integrity in respect to McCord and the Lou Russell checks and his arrogant, presumptuous list of "Recommendations", that logical Dick is worried about "one other problem" (a casual afterthought, no doubt) -- the problem of "Bob Saltzman and possibly other lecturers who have been representing themselves as speaking on behalf of the CTIA". Logical Dick is concerned about these poor fellows, for some reason (was he getting a cut of their proceeds?, my computer asks), and he wants to make sure that they will still have a platform. "My suggestion there", says logical Dick with fatherly pride and one eye on the list of people to whom he plans to send copies of his letter (which just happens to include Norman Mailer and Tim Butz), "My suggestion there is that they shift over to speak on behalf of the Fifth Estate ..." Well, isn't that just a dandy little solution -- the "truth-seekers" can continue to sell lectures at \$750 per, and Dick Sprague continues to have his theories peddled, with or without a cut.

Bud, you and I have had our differences -- over Garrison, over the wisdom of the conference at Georgetown, over the way in which the limited Committee funds could best be allocated, and over our largely philosophical difference about the importance of details -- but I have never once doubted your honesty and sincerity. Of course, this will carry no weight with the dingbats -- they probably think I have lands and grooves in my rectum and are running around right now collecting my turds for ballistic tests -- but these preposterous fantasies from Dorland and Sprague should not be allowed to hurt you, particularly in view of all that you have done and which neither of those ingrates even alluded to. I was particularly pleased with Mary Ferrell's letter, and I am confident that many others support you, whether they write about it or not.

Sincerely,

Bob Smith