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Dear Quin,

As usual, even for Sunday's, I was up and began to read at 4 a.m. The book I'm now reading, a fine one, "Neil Sheehan's A Bright and Shining Lie, deals with Vietnam, if you've not read it. and by the most remarkable coincidence, I'd been interrupted yesterday in the middle of a paragraph on page 315. So, when I resumed reading this morning, the first sentence I read is: "(Our ignorance and our American ideology kept us from discerning the larger truths on Vietnam below the surface reality we could see. Professionally (and this is the sentence ~~xx~~ really two), we were fortunate in our ignorance. Had any reporter been sufficiently knowledgeable and open-minded to have questioned the justice and good sense of U.S. intervention in those years he ~~he~~ would have been fired as a 'subversive.')

Well, I'm sure that did happen, whether or not over Vietnam reporting, but that it not ~~why~~ I write you. I think you can see how Sheehan's observation coincides with what I suggested ought be a study that does address real "national security." and who decides what the official concept is. Vietnam is a bright and shining example of how disastrous to the country and to the world the official concept has been.

Latin America is an ancient and current bastardized concept of national security and it has been and is quite disastrous. This is the area in which I was caught up and fired, without charges, as I think I told you, without any hearing, not even a phony one. Despite my record, which was excellent. But it was good only in terms of real rather than this very wrong concept, and I can still give chapter and verse although I took not a single paper with me when I left. In fact, wild Bill Donovan gave me some kind of award but that is in the lawyers' files and I never got it back and, naturally, CIA can't find it in my records. (They did find, however, what before I went to work for OSS I'd given FDR that he used in a fireside chat, one of the things the FBI and Criminal Division never came up with, as you may recall.) (About Latin America.)

I'm certain that at some point your people have considered what is real national security and what isn't and I'm confident that in getting and disclosing the Cuba Missile Crisis records the potential for disaster from what has become the traditional concept was apparent.

When I wrote you recently I said it seemed apparent that things were moving too fast for there to have been much if any input from the lower levels at State in particular. I also believed, as I think I said, that there would have been, when I worked there, prior analyses. Can you see how the decimation of the Latin American Division eliminated this kind of thinking and analyses simply because, in Sheehan's simple and direct words, those who had the knowledge and were open-minded had been eliminated by those who did not want knowledge and open-mindedness to have any input on policy.

The honcho in that domination of policy by ideology was the late John Peurifoy. He had a similar role in our overthrow of the democratically elected Guatemalan government and what that meant and led to is now fairly well known and not as well understood.

But there was nobody around to have any influence on Cuba, Guatemala and Nicaragua policy. Or the Dominican Republic when LBJ sent the Marines in to try and succor the militarists who had overthrown their democratically elected government. JFK had refused to recognize the military dictatorship and stated our policy not to do this in general.

Neither Sheehan nor any other reporter of whom I know ever questioned or wrote about what happened inside the government to those who were open-minded and sought to do their assigned duties in the traditional way once this concept of what is not "national security" replaced reality. I hope that at some point someone does so that work can be available when it can be used. Best, Harold Weisberg

Harold