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Dear Peter,

Copies to Kevin. When I came to the part of the O'Donnell oral history about which I wrote you immediately, I reacted with some emotion and without thinking about it. When I later started to write what I intended to be a short^{er} addition much came to mind. I use some of that here, making it a little longer. There are several reasons for adding slightly to what first came to mind but I will not argue if you disagree.

One is that in a book that makes a prima facie case for an unspecified military conspiracy in the JFK assassination I believe than any prior military conspiracy is appropriate for inclusion. Another is the interrelation of Viet Nam with the JFK assassination I think it is not now necessary to articulate. I could have added, for example, my ¹⁹⁶⁷ interview with one of JFK's intellectual generals, Gavinⁿ, in which he told me of JFK's plans to end our Viet Nam involvement and the planned timing. ^{It does, I think, help round the story out with what I believe has never been reported.} I've written Wrono to get his opinion on the newness and I'll ^{soon} be able to ask McKnight, who is a Viet Nam expert.

Another reason is self-accreditation. Knowing ~~how~~ what Harry Livingstone has written to and about me and what Kent Carroll told Publishers Weekly his book will say and having heard of other similar possibilities I have begun to do a little of this. I begin the book I'm working on that way.

NEVER AGAIN! also says that in time of crisis our basic institutions fail. In recounting, quite truthfully, how easy the contemporary analysis of the Tonkin Gulf analysis was and that the major media did not report it I add to the case of institutional failure. But with Viet Nam, the magnitude of it! So, for the book and for history, I believe that is important.

I've written Wrono to see if he made a copy of that analysis, I'll ask McKnight next week and I wrote the younger friend to whom I'd given that research for a book he planned. (He was clerk to an appeals court judge, general counsel of Lucas films, and he now heads about four or five Lucas divisions. He then was like a son to us and beginning in high school spent summers here. His name is Howard Roffman. I did not mention it on purpose because of his present responsibilities. If they do not have copies perhaps they can date it with some writing, as from the search I was able to make here I cannot.)

I so wish I had been able to do Tiger To Ride! I made quite a series of such contemporaneous analyses and they all turned out to be correct. Which is not boasting. It is to indict so many, including the institution of the press. Even on the Cuba Missile crisis. And I omit the "n" because Cuba was virtually a bystander in it. It is the thrust of that analysis from which I took the title, that Khrushchev gave JFK his own tiger to ride in what he did. And it made for peace in the world then and vis-a-vis the major powers since then.

I think that simple fairness to Johnson suggests an^a additional basis for including this.

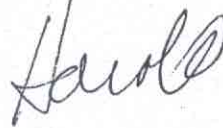
To those who stop to think it will say that in political life there is no cost for others to pay that a politician will not cause, if he thinks it is a benefit to himself.

And then there is history to be served.

If as I believe this excerpt has never been used before that alone should attract attention to NEVER AGAIN!

I'm sending copies of this letter and the add to Kevin, Wrone and to McKnight on his return.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Harold".

*At end of Epilogue,
(extra space)*

Whether spying or analysis provides most or the best intelligence is and has been debated for years. My own service in intelligence was 50 years ago. That length of time without any direct connection with intelligence and the fact that I was never in spooking but was an analyst may both prejudice my belief that most and the best intelligence is produced by analysis of what is readily available without any spying.

In the late 1960s I planned the book, Tiger to Ride. It was to have been an analysis of the changes in President Kennedy and in his policies that began with the end of the October 1962 Cuba Missile Crisis and of President Johnson's changes in Kennedy's policies.

*to write
"Tiger to Ride"
in
1968*

While continuing my work on the assassination and its investigations, I also collected information for Tiger to Ride. This included making contemporaneous analysis of significant events, sometimes before they had run their course. This is what professional analysts do.

The Gulf of Tonkin incident, the direct cause of our open military involvement in Viet Nam, was one of those significant events during which I prepared an analysis of it.

The only information available to me was available to all - the public press.

My analysis, that the whole thing was a fake created to lead to our fighting inside Viet Nam, was later proven to be correct by others who had access, years later, to official records. The first of the books confirming my spot analysis that I recall was Joseph Goulden's The Gulf of Tonkin Incident. ()

first volume?

(Goulden, then a reporter for the Philadelphia Inquirer, was one of the first to publish the unconfirmed report that Oswald had been connected with the FBI. He appears in the FBI's and the Commission's records.)

When it became clear that my other work would preclude my writing Tiger to Ride, at least for quite some time, I loaned that research, including copies of my several contemporaneous analyses of ongoing and potentially the most serious of events, to a young friend.

When he did not have the time to do his own book, he returned that material to me with a separate comment on how unusual it was to prepare so accurate an analysis on the most significant of ongoing events. Retrieving that material from files in storage is now beyond my capabilities, but aside from that younger friend, two historians later read and still recall that analysis.

That I prepared that analysis at the time of those events is the norm in intelligence. So, doing it contemporane^{ously}ly, particularly with a book in mind, was not unusual. Nor was its accuracy any special tribute to me. Rather is it commentary on the failure of the media to make its independent assessment and analysis and on the fear of political consequences of not agreeing with the official line. The media largely restricted itself to official handouts.

In one of history's quirks, only two in the Congress opposed it. In the House it was the most liberal member, Vito Marcantonio of New York; in the Senate it was "Mr Conservative," Robert Taft of Ohio. One ^{1/16} voted against the Johnson resolution, each held it violated the Constitution.

The essence of my analysis is that the events described by the military never happened, that they would have been senseless for the North Viet Nameese who had nothing to gain from firing torpedoes at those two American destroyers without hitting either of them, and that the stories released by the military were not even credible. They were also contradictory. My analysis went further and said that the reason for the mi^litary making up those

hasty stories was to provide an excuse for American involvement in land fighting in Viet Nam in support of the imposed government American military operations were to keep in power.

Thus, that was a military conspiracy to get us in a land war in Viet Nam.

This is a book that makes a prima facie case of a military conspiracy in the JFK assassination.

While this book was being edited for publication, one of the historians who read the Tonkin Gulf analysis, my friend, Professor David Wrone, of

Wisconsin, sent me a copy of the 110 pages of an oral history he obtained from the Lyndon Johnson Library, in Austin, Texas. The interviewee was the late Kenneth O'Donnell. He had, among other JFK White House responsibilities, that of appointments secretary. That is the one who granted and denied appointments to see the presidents.

He was also one of the highest echelon of the JFK White House staff who accepted President Johnson's request to continue to serve under him. O'Donnell had a number of the highest responsibilities under Johnson, with whom he was and had been friends. He thus was in an official position of trust, high up in the Johnson White House, although he remained a Kennedyite.

His statements in the oral history are in this sense official statements.

What is captioned a "legal agreement" by the National Archives, Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, was signed jointly by O'Donnell's widow Justine and by the National Archivist.

On pages 84 and 85 of the official transcript of the oral history conducted by Dr. Paige E. Mullhollan (right) on July 23, 1969, in O'Donnell's then office in the Park Square Building in Boston, Massachusetts, Mullhollan led O'Donnell into remembering Johnson's campaign in the 1964 election.

What follows is O'Donnell's entirely different version of Johnson and Viet Nam and how he got us fighting there, on land. It is also an account of how the military created and used that "Tonkin Gulf Incident," as it is known, although there were two allegedly involving two different destroyers on two different occasions:

A "... The only other part of the [1964] campaign that I think was of any significance - there are two parts. Number one, which is coming back to haunt him, is the Vietnam thing.

"Q. Was that even considered much? Was that just ~~crept~~ crept into the speeches without much consideration at the time?

"A. No. You see, what happened Vietnam had become pretty hot now. Tonkin Gulf has now come, which again the poor guy is maligned about - Senator Fullbright is not correct - but it was not his (LBJ's) fault, nobody had ever told him the truth. (Senator William Fullbright of Arkansas at the time was chairman of the Senate foreign relations committee. He criticized Johnson for getting us into a land war in Viet Nam.) I was there when the thing broke. Lyndon Johnson no more wanted Vietnam in his pocket than he wanted anything in the world. The military men may have told him fibs. I don't know. But he took it as a test, and he and I talked about it that night, of whether he has got any guts or not, that's all. They're just testing him, why would you do something like that doesn't make any sense? A provocation which has no military significance to it. They're going to test him to see if he has got enough backbone, or whether in a political campaign he dared do anything about it, and then they'd go further maybe next time. So he asked for the resolution and then they retaliated, but it was perfectly on the up and up - there was no thought of troops, no nothing. But Dick Goodwin (also of Kennedy's staff) was writing his stuff on Vietnam. I'm as sure as

led?
incident?

crept is correct

Footnote?

On page ~~3~~, ~~in line eleven~~, if confirmed by Wrone and McKnight
5, after line 9

Perhaps because of the time lag, this oral history not having been disclosed until
1982, scholars seem to have missed this.

I'm ^tsiting here Lyndon Johnson was as sincere as he possible (sic) could be about Vietnam and getting out of there. That comes really to fruition in 1964 and then in early 1965 when the military situation changed rather drastically. But I think he was as straight as a string on his speeches. He gets a little flamboyant and he says things maybe a little more than he should have, but basically that is what he meant. I know that. I talked to him about it many, many times. I was for getting out of Vietnam totally from 1961 on, and he and I used to talk about it. There was no problem on that until late in 1964."

As the professional interrogator Mullhollan should have seen to it that when the oral history was typed there would be no confusion but he did not. What is more surprising is that when O'Donnell recorded this definitive and startlingly different account of how we got into that terrible and very costly war in Viet Nam, Mullhollan asked not a single question about it. He asked only the single quoted question about the campaign speeches!

It is astounding that an expert would not ask a single question, or ask for any specifics or added details or for names or for more on the military lying to the President and keeping him ignorant. Or, of course, on the fabrication of the incident and all the lies about it that, as O'Donnell says, were designed to get us in that war by giving Johnson no political alternative to asking for the Tonkin Gulf resolution. That bypassed the Constitutional requirement that the Congress and only the Congress declare war.

As O'Donnell said, what the Navy attributed to the North Vietnamese "doesn't make any sense." He described it as "provocation which has no military significance to it."

That the Tonkin Gulf incident was made up by our military is not

new. That fact ^{now} does not rest on analysis, mine and without doubt others unknown, it was that clear.

What is new in O'Donnell's statements is that it was not Johnson's desire or intention to get us into that war and that the military timed this adventure to get us into that war to coincide with the political campaign in which the militarist Goldwater was LBJ's opponent. The military understood Johnson very well. They knew he would regard it as "a test" of "whether he has got any guts or not" to "see if he has got enough backbone."

O'Donnell is correct on all points, as I recall from that period. Any such pipsqueak attack by the Vietnamese served no military purpose for it at all and, given the nature of Goldwater's campaign, if Johnson did nothing in reaction to those invented nonincidents, he would have been ruined politically as a coward, a man who had no "guts," no "backbone" at all.

No such man can ever be elected president and that is what gave Johnson no real choice, no matter how much he opposed it.

These were not the only military provocations of that era and it was Goldwater who sensationalized one of them. There were at least two such contrived incidents involving Cuba, the Cuba our military wanted to attack and invade at the time of the 1962 Cuba Missile Crisis. One involved our naval base at Guantanamo, for which there has been no military need at all since World War II. The other involved capturing Cuban fishing boats on the high seas. But Castro did not take either bait.

Once again it is appropriate to consult our founding fathers, those I revere as the greatest and wisest political thinkers and doers of all time.

In his Federalist Paper No. 25 Alexander Hamilton wrote of the military:

"For it is a truth, which the experience of all ages has attested, that the people are commonly most in danger when the means of injuring their rights are in the possession of those of whom they entertain the least suspicion." (New American Library Mentoⁿ/edition, page 164)

Those who founded this nation, as Hamilton's essay makes as clear as anything can be, were determined to restrain and control the military. His very next chapter goes into that the military cannot spend a cent without the authorization of Congress.

They saw to it - or in the realities of their day thought they saw to it - that the President alone could not declare war, that the Congress had to ~~vote~~^{declare} to go to war.

Yet in lives, in casualties and in all other costs, including our virtual bankruptcy, we have fought many undeclared wars of various sizes, from small and short to the most costly single one in our history, in Viet Nam, without any declaration of war.

"For it is a truth," attested to by our own and very wise founding fathers, "that the people are most st ~~often~~ commonly in danger" from "those of whom they entertain the least suspicion," their military.