

14 January 1973

HW:

Your 4Jan73 after hearing the tape of Schurmann and Gehlen, I can see how you got some of the impressions you note, but suggest you misread them in several particulars. This is because they were compressing a great deal into half an hour, were talking ~~with~~ <sup>without</sup> scripts and on the air, (not possible to be as blunt as you and I can here) and were talking to a particular audience which already knew -- and did not have to be told -- that JFK was zapped only after he began to withdraw from Vietnam. This doesn't alter the fact that he had started out as a hawk on the question. It was Schurmann who first pointed out years ago that LJB quickly reversed the withdrawal policy which JFK had begun. They also know -- and their audience knows -- again, as Schurmann was one of the first to point out at the time, that JFK had nothing to do with the CIA job that eliminated Diem, regardless of how delighted he must have been to get rid of the bastard.

The clear implication of what Schurmann said is that the French mission bombing was a military excursion either to test Nixon or let him know what the score was going to be. This is a familiar line with him, and is in fact what the STM and I have been plugging all along -- what do you think she made out those little chronologies for, collating such things as the peace agreement, the bombing, and Nixon's uptight campaign behavior into a seemingly obvious pattern? Incidentally, it's still not clear whether that bombing was just another Navy signal like the Golf of Tonkin incidents or whether Nixon himself, never intending to sign any agreement, at least at that time, ordered it himself. The evidence -- and we have mountains of it -- is still inconclusive either way. But we still feel sure that the bombing of the mission was a clear turning point that effectively scotched the October agreement.

You make a good point in your remark that it's a rarity to find a militarist who is also a deep political thinker. I would agree with you all down the line except for the Navy, which in my experience gives its officers far more political training than either of the other services. I've known several of them quite well, and if any militarist is going to do any thinking politically, he's more than likely going to be a Navy man. I've also known some generals in the Army, and their training appears to be far less intensive. Don't know any Air Force wheels, but they show no signs of having too many brains, political or otherwise. Look at LeMay. This doesn't mean that any admiral is likely to be a political genius. Look at Radford, Moorer et al. But at least they are exposed to political training and those with the aptitude often emerge pretty sharp. It is limited to and considered part of their strategic training, of course, but an admiral is likely to think at least one or two steps beyond a general in the same position, in my experience.

jdw