

28 May 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Information and Privacy Division

THROUGH : Acting Chief, History Staff

FROM :

SUBJECT : Security Violation

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1. On 22 May 1981 when reviewing some material for inclusion in a volume of the Official History of the Bay of Pigs Operation, I came across the following quotation in Arthur M. Schlesinger's book Robert Kennedy and His Times (p.454) with reference to CIA and FBI operatives who: "see themselves as the appointed guardians of the Republic, infinitely more devoted and knowledgeable than transient elected officials, morally authorized to do on their own whatever they believed the nation's security demanded. Let others interfere at their peril. J. D. Esterline, the CIA's supervisor of planning for the Bay of Pigs, bitterly told the board of inquiry, 'as long as decisions by professionals can be set aside by people who know not whereof they speak, you won't succeed!'"

2. The source reference specified on p. 971 for the above quotation is given as "Cuba Study Group, May 19, 1961, RFK papers." This source reference is incorrect and should read: Cuba Study Group, 19th Meeting, 22-23 May 1961, p. 22. (The 19 May 1961 testimony at the meeting of the CSG was by Admiral Arleigh Burke, not Jake Esterline as spelled out by Schlesinger.)

3. Checking my record of reviews of the Cuba Study Group (e.g. the Taylor Committee Report) which were done some years ago at the request of IPD, I learned that although I had recommended sanitization and declassification of the 19th Meeting, the NSC recommended that the SECRET classification be retained, and this was done. I also reconfirmed the SECRET classification with Judy Koucky of NARS today (27 May 81). Consequently, Dr. Schlesinger had used a citation from a classified document.

4. At NARS suggestion, I contacted Suzanne Forbes, an archivist at the John F. Kennedy Library, to ask if she could explain how Schlesinger had gained access to the classified report. After checking, she informed me that when working on his book (published in 1978) Schlesinger had gained access to the copies of Taylor Committee papers which were included among other papers in the Robert Kennedy collection. At the time that Schlesinger was granted such access, the Robert Kennedy papers were being held in "courtesy storage" by NARS in Washington; but access was controlled by the Kennedy family not NARS.

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5. I bring this matter to your attention should you think it would be of interest to the NSC. I also think that NARS should be asked to insure that the collection of Cuba Study Group papers on the BOP which now are held in the Robert Kennedy files at the JFK Library be reviewed for sanitization and classified in accordance with the Taylor Committee papers on the BOP held in the National Security Files at the JFK Library. If this is not done, there is a strong probability of subsequent security violations.

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