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Speech on Coverage of Bay of Pigs Buildup



United Press International

OF PIGS: Anti-Castro Cuban exiles as they took part in the invasion of the Caribbean country a few days before invasion of Cuba in 1961. The article discussed the difficult decisions on reporting these activities at the time.

show some of the same restraint they would exercise in a shooting war.

He went on to say, "Every newspaper now asks itself with respect to every story, 'Is it news?' All I suggest is that you add the question: 'Is it in the interest of national security?'"

If the press should recommend voluntary measures to prevent the publication of material endangering the national security in peacetime, the President said, "the Government would cooperate wholeheartedly."

Turner Catledge, who was the retiring president of the A.S.N.E., Felix McKnight of The Dallas Times-Herald, the incoming president, and Lee Hills, executive editor of the Knight newspapers, took the President's statement as an invitation to talk.

Within two weeks, a delegation of editors, publishers and news agency executives was at the White House. They told President Kennedy they saw no need at that time for machinery to help prevent the disclosure of vital security information. They agreed that there should be another meeting in a few months. However, no further meeting was ever held.

That day in the White House, President Kennedy ran down a list of what he called premature disclosures of security information. His examples were mainly drawn from The New York Times.

He mentioned, for example, Paul Kennedy's story about the training of anti-Castro forces in Guatemala. Mr. Catledge pointed out that this information had been published in La Hora in Guatemala and in The Nation in this country before it was ever published in The New York Times.

"But it was not news until it appeared in The Times," the President replied.

While he scolded The New York Times, the President said in an aside to Mr. Catledge, "If you had printed more about the operation you would have saved us from a colossal mistake."

"Sorry You Didn't Tell It"

More than a year later, President Kennedy was still talking the same way. In a conversation with Orvil Dryfoos in the White House on Sept. 13, 1962, he said, "I wish you had run everything on Cuba. . . I am just sorry you didn't tell it at the time."

Those words were echoed by Arthur Schlesinger when he wrote, "I have wondered whether, if the press had behaved irresponsibly, it would not have spared the country a disaster."

They are still echoing down the corridors of history. Just the other day in Washington, Senator Russell of Georgia confessed that, although he was chairman of the Senate Armed Forces Committee, he didn't know the timing of the Bay of Pigs operation.

the President used both sides of the paper.

The existence of this letter has never been mentioned publicly before. I have the permission of Mr. Dryfoos's widow, now Mrs. Andrew Heiskell, to read it to you today:

"Dear Marian:

"I want you to know how sorry I was to hear the sad news of Orvil's untimely death.

"I had known him for a number of years and two experiences I had with him in the last two years gave me a clear insight into his unusual qualities of mind and heart. One involved a matter of national security—the other his decision to refrain from printing on October 21st the news, which only the man for The Times possessed, on the presence of Russian missiles in Cuba, upon my informing him that we needed twenty-four hours more to complete our preparations.

"This decision of his made far more effective our later actions and thereby contributed greatly to our national safety.

"All this means very little now, but I did want you to know that a good many people some distance away, had the same regard for Orvil's character as did those who knew him best.

"I know what a blow this is to you, and I hope you will accept Jackie's and my deepest sympathy.

"Sincerely, John F. Kennedy."

In the Cuban missile crisis, things were handled somewhat differently than in the previous year. The President telephoned directly to the publisher of The New York Times.

He had virtually been invited to do so in their conversation in the White House barely a month before.

That conversation had been on the subject of security leaks in the press and how to prevent them, and Mr. Dryfoos had told the President that what was needed was prior information and prior consultation. He said that, when there was danger of security information getting into print, the thing to do was to call in the publishers and explain matters to them.

In the missile crisis, President Kennedy did exactly that.

Ten minutes before I was due on this platform this morning Mr. Reston telephoned me from Washington to give me further details of what happened that day.

"The President called me," Mr. Reston said. "He understood that I had been talking to Mac Bundy and he knew from the line of questioning that we knew the critical fact—that Russian missiles had indeed been placed in Cuba.

"The President told me," Mr. Reston continued, "that he was going on television on Monday evening to report to the American people. He said

SENATORS DELAY C.I.A. SHOWDOWN

Compromise Plan Is Sought on Overseasing Agency

By E. W. KENWORTHY

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 1 —

Contending Senate leaders in the quarrel over supervision of the Central Intelligence Agency postponed a showdown today in the hope of reaching a compromise.

Senator J. W. Fulbright, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, had planned to present for floor action a resolution to add three members of his committee to a "watchdog" group now headed by Senator Richard B. Russell, chairman of the Armed Services Committee.

This resolution, sponsored by Senator Eugene J. McCarthy, Democrat of Minnesota, had been approved 14 to 5 by the Foreign Relations Committee on May 17.

Two hours before the Senate convened at noon, however, the majority leader, Mike Mansfield, called Senators Fulbright, Russell, McCarthy and John Stennis of Mississippi to his office.

Afterward, Mr. Mansfield said that the McCarthy resolution would not be brought up this week because "we are still trying to work out a compromise solution in consultation with various interested Senators."

Backed by Mansfield

Mr. Mansfield strongly supports the contention of Senators Fulbright and McCarthy that the activities of the intelligence agency affect foreign policy and that consequently the Foreign Relations Committee should be represented on the group exercising legislative "oversight" of the agency.

Ever since the agency was created in 1947 by the National Security Act, seven Senators from the Armed Services Committee and the subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee handling the defense budget have constituted the group to which the agency's director has reported. On the House side, the director has reported to two subcommittees of Armed Services and Appropriations committees.

Senator Mansfield reported that all of those present at the meeting "had open minds" and "seemed to be not averse to a compromise if one could be worked out."

CUBA ACCUSES U.S. AGAIN ON SABOTEURS

HA'ANA, June 1 (Reuters). — The Government accused the United States today of having "sent a heavily armed saboteur in Cuba. It was the second time in two days Cuba had made such an accusation.

A communiqué issued on the fifth day of a state of alert proclaimed against "possible Yankee aggression" said that an agent of the Central Intelligence Agency, identified as Iez Cabreras, Florida,