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Letters

Philip Agee's Source

To the Editor:

As the publisher of "White Paper? Whitewash: Philip Agee on the C.I.A. and El Salvador," we must respond to Arnaud de Borchgrave's ludicrous allegation that Agee's "material — supplied by his Cuban friends — was a primary source for recent articles in The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post."

Those newspapers and others indeed received advance copies of the last chapter of our book, Agee's detailed analysis of the State Department's white paper on Communist interference in El Salvador. In it Agee concludes that the "captured documents," even if all were genuine, do not support the conclusions the department drew from them. The two newspapers confirmed Agee's findings, as did many

others in Europe and Latin America.

However, the "material" Agee used for his analysis — the white paper and nothing but the white paper — was supplied by the State Department, not the Cubans or anyone else.

This analysis was based upon fluency in Spanish and an extremely careful reading of the Spanish "originals," the English translations and the State Department's conclusions. Agee documents scores of mistranslations, improper attributions and erroneous or deliberately false conclusions. As Jon Glassman of the State Department, who wrote the white paper, admitted to The Journal, "We completely screwed it up."

Mr. de Borchgrave's premise is baffling: how can it be an example of K.G.B. disinformation to point out that a Spanish word has been mistranslated, or that a conclusion in the State Department analysis is not supported by anything in the documents upon which the analysis is supposedly based? Perhaps Mr. de Borchgrave should read our book.

MICHAEL RATNER
President, Deep Cover Publications
New York, Aug. 14, 1981