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W.H. Smith
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16 April 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Princeton Consultants' Meeting, 18-19 October 1962, and the Cuba Estimate

1. During this meeting I, as Chairman, knew that offensive missiles had been discovered in Cuba, but I could not tell this to the Consultants. We had scheduled a discussion of the Cuba estimate, however, and eventually I posed to them the question: would the Soviets put offensive missiles into Cuba. The answer was unanimously and emphatically no. I then remarked that their judgment agreed with our estimate.

2. It should be said that the Consultants' opinion was not given on the basis of an extensive examination of all indicators. The Consultants did know what was generally known, e.g. that SAMs were in Cuba. But their estimate was based on their judgment of Soviet conduct and policy.

3. In the circumstances, I would not have considered it fair to the Consultants to press them for a judgment based on all indicators -- I was sufficiently embarrassed as it was.

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4. Consultants present were: Hamilton Fish Armstrong, Cyril Black, Allen Dulles, Caryl Haskins, Calvin Hoover, Klaus Knorr, Col. G.A. Lincoln, Harold Linder, Max Millikan, Philip Mosely, Lucian Pye, Ray Sontag, Joseph Strayer, and Cuyler Young.

5. It is worth adding that at the next Princeton meeting, when Sherman Kent was in the chair, the Consultants all declared that they had made the only defensible estimate, even though it had turned out to be wrong.

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