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About Messrs. Kennedy, Nixon and Cuba

The renewed conflict between President Kennedy and former Vice-President Nixon over the Cuban debate in the 1960 campaign has some aspect of ancient history. Yet it also stirs large questions that deserve to be aired and answered.

With respect to the facts, there is clearly a large gap. In his new book, Mr. Nixon charges that Mr. Kennedy, at the very moment when he was publicly calling for active American aid to the anti-Castro forces and in effect reproaching the Eisenhower Administration for inertia, knew that a guerrilla force was being trained under U. S. direction. Such information had been given to Mr. Kennedy, Nixon asserts, in CIA "briefings."

Mr. Kennedy flatly denies that he had received any such information. His denial is strongly supported by CIA chief Allen Dulles, who certainly has no visible Democratic bias, and who politely suggests that there has been an "honest misunderstanding." Mr. Eisenhower has issued a rather guarded affirmation of Nixon's version.

All that is plain in this tangle is that, at no time in the preparation of his book, did Mr. Nixon seek to check the facts with Allen Dulles. If he had, he would surely have been obliged to record Mr. Dulles' rebuttal. This must, at the very least, be described as journalistic negligence.

But in another sense it does not go to the heart of the matter. For the deeper question, which seems to elude Mr. Nixon, is whether his subsequent conduct would have been justified even if Mr. Kennedy were totally guilty as charged.

Mr. Nixon says that, when his opponent issued his call for direct aid to the anti-Castro rebels, he felt it was not only his duty to maintain silence on our secret operations but to "go to the other extreme" and denounce Mr. Kennedy's proposal. This he did in their ensuing television debate; he said Kennedy's call for action was "dangerously irresponsible," that it would, if heeded, "lose all our friends in Latin America" and provide an "open invitation to Premier Khrushchev" to come into Latin America and to engage us in what would be a civil war and possibly worse than that."

It is perhaps ironic, Mr. Nixon himself notes, that what many editorialists in many places deemed his finest hour, full of statesmanlike overtones, proved to be an act of calculated duplicity.

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lavished on any show in years . . . Merrick will advertise this review, under the heading, "This is what the real Walter Kerr said."

The proceeds of the premiere of "Counterfeit Traitor," the new William Holden movie, will go to the Overseas Press Club for its World Memorial Press Center. The Forum Gallery is exhibiting Chaim Gross' newest works, in both sculpture and drawings . . . In his next film, "A Talent for Loving," Peter Sellers will speak with a Tennessee accent. He's studying recordings by Tennessee's Sen. Kefauver.

Charles Washburn, press agent for the Ringling Circus, was trained by George M. Cohan. When Cohan starred in "Ah, Wilderness!", he refused to play Worcester, Mass., because his mother had been scared by a mouse in the Opera House there . . . Washburn made front-page news by booking Cohan, instead, into North Brookfield's Town Hall. Cohan told him: "Find a rat in some town that shocked my sister, and I'll make a press agent out of you yet."

Frank Sinatra's songwriters, Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen, are writing Juliet Prowse's nightclub act for the Flamingo . . . Richard Rodgers has an option to move "No Strings" from the 54th St. Theater, but after studying the lines at the box office he decided to stay put . . . Although Lerner and Loewe have split, they'll write pieces for the "Lerner & Loewe Songbook" for Simon & Schuster.

Lillian Roth won her "I Can Get It for You Wholesale" role easily, but lost her negotiations about salary with producer David Merrick. "I guess," she said, "Merrick is on the side of the angels —the Broadway show-backing variety."

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ntic senators have been loath ministration. In fact, criticism perceptive, penetrating nature upply here for some time. ackson's speech was greeted in "put up" job, a few far-out as to suspect that the Senator a ventriloquist's dummy to dissatisfaction with UN Am-

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cording to insiders, that the only newspaper accounts of not the speech itself, when he nator's theses at his weekly

the $100,000,000 UN bond issue, t wants badly and which was t in the Senate, with no better the House.

made plans to see his predecessor, out in the California compare notes and engage in all talk about such matters as disarmament parley, summitry

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