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FRANK G. WISNER
1210 EIGHTEENTH STREET, N. W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20036

FEDERAL B-0181

March 24, 1965

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

Your letter of March 19, 1965, has reached me at home where I am in the process of convalescing from some very recent surgery (single hernia - no complications) and I am also busily engaged in a whole series of projects which answer to the description and reference contained in your pre-penultimate paragraph (top of page 2). You are entirely correct in your understanding that I consider it entirely worthwhile and, in fact, very important, for those of us who are in a position to do so, to bring their knowledge and influence to bear upon things which are being written for publication and which are concerned with or bear significantly upon the activities and responsibilities of the Agency - past, present and future. It follows from this that as a general rule I am willing to do all that I can to help and to persuade others to contribute the amount of information and guidance which appears to be warranted by the merits of any particular case.

As regards the project which you have outlined in your letter, I share with many others some very serious reservations regarding the motivation and responsibilities of this intending author. It is my personal opinion that this man has much to answer for as the result of numerous past deficiencies in his conduct and attitude - by no means limited to the very bad book to which you have referred. Moreover, whereas he may (as you suggest) be capable of writing a good book in commemoration of the Hungarian Revolution, it is my suspicion that he would prefer to write something sexy and sensational in the expectation of larger sales and bigger benefits to himself. However, and despite the foregoing considerations, I agree with your point that he might write a worse book without the help that you and others could give him, than would be the case if he were to receive the benefit of your wise and knowledgeable guidance. In the same general sense, I consider this man capable of writing a vindictive book if he felt

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that all doors were closed to him and that he was being regarded and treated as pariah. [I am all too keenly aware of the possibilities and temptations which exist to distort and embellish inaccurately upon the policies and programs of certain radio voices - which were widely, though unfairly, accused at the time of having deliberately and irresponsibly incited the Hungarian patriots to revolt.]

The net result is that I agree with and support your basic reasoning subject to the indicated qualifications and cautionary observations; and I shall stand ready to assist you and to backstop your efforts at this end at such time and in such manner as you may call upon me to do. Moreover, I do not think that you should despair of the possibility of receiving some assistance from Walter P. and some others who are personally more familiar with the events in question, e.g., C.M. and J.C. - both of whom were more or less directly engaged.

Finally in this connection, I have two specific suggestions or recommendations to offer, viz., (a) you should encourage the author to believe that he can expect some assistance from you in return for which you will expect him to deal with this in a responsible manner; and (b) either alone or in collaboration with the author you should draw up a sort of prospectus of the requirements for information, and furnish a copy of this to me and to the others in Washington whose help will be needed.

The purpose of the first of these suggestions is self-evident. The latter is required in order to give some better focus and direction to the effort and to provide some clarifying delimitation as to the amount and kind of material that is desired.

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As always I enjoyed hearing from you and I shall look forward with pleasure to the opportunity of working in harness with you once again. I hope that it will be possible for us to make some contact during your home leave this summer, as I do not have any present plans to be away from Washington on a trip of any appreciable extent prior to next October when Polly and I plan again to pass through Paris enroute to Spain.

With warmest personal regards,

Sincerely,



Frank G. Wisner

*See next page - in
H. P. C.*

P. S. Since dictating the foregoing it has occurred to me that there are a number of excellent and highly informative works on the subject of the Hungarian revolt which should by all means be read or at least looked at by this intending author before he begins to call upon you (and through you upon others) to provide information. The well-illustrated volume which was brought out by Time, Incorporated, very shortly after the events in question (and which publication was largely inspired by C. D. Jackson) is certainly close to the top of this list. There are many others, although some must be examined and handled with care as they suffer from some very strong bias and "special pleading". I should also like to mention that if Chip Bohlen were willing to play, he would be capable of providing some unique and highly significant insights upon the Hungarian affair - as seen from the Moscow end. You might ask him about this and in so doing tell him that I vividly recall his contemporaneous reporting as well as his subsequent comments upon the Soviet dilemma and the following firmness of their decision.

Also, obviously the whole historical context is highly significant since the reactions of the great powers cannot be understood and evaluated correctly without reference to the immediately preceding Polish (Gomulka) declaration of semi-independence from strict Soviet control; and the simultaneous kick-off of the Suez incident which soon overshadowed everything else and badly confused and weakened the position of the West as regards Hungary. Finally, I hope that the author will not fail to give to Krishna Menon the accolade which he so fully earned and so well deserved as the principal stalking-horse and running-dog for the Russians in the arena of the United Nations. If you, or the author, have any question about this appalling performance, it would give me the greatest pleasure to provide particulars.

I could also furnish some fairly well-informed speculations concerning the attitude and reactions of the Yugoslavs which were highly significant. (You will doubtless recall that Imre Nagi sought sanctuary in the Yugoslav Embassy.)

F.G.W.