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499 S. Capitol S.W., Suite 402 406

Washington, D.C. 20003

September 8, 1983

Mr. Morton C. Blackwell  
Special Assistant to the President  
for Public Liaison  
The White House  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Morton,

As always the Wednesday Outreach Working Group sessions continue to provide useful information to attendees. With tongue in cheek I have to say we either learn something useful about the Caribbean Crisis or we learn something about an Administration spokesman.

Yesterday's session revealed more about a three star general and the Defense Intelligence Agency than it did about the issues. Lieutenant General James A. Williams' "thumb nail" sketches of Central American nation's were just that . . . and nothing more. Throughout his entire presentation he never mentioned the words, Cuba or Soviet. I gave him that opportunity with my first question as to the nature of the threat to the United States posed from Central America. His response did not mention the Soviets or Cubans. He suggested a long term threat of countries falling to communism in some sort of slow motion manner which would eventually threaten our grandchildren.

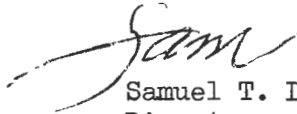
I couldn't resist one last question to give him another opportunity. My question was about Soviet and Cuban military forces in Cuba and the extraordinary build up of military force in Nicaragua, a country now having such military power that only the U.S. might could overthrow it. I asked about the potential of a Soviet and Cuban military air presence in Nicaragua operating from improved airfields and the parallel 11,000 foot runways being built at Punta Huete, outside Managua. His answer, paraphrased, was that the Sandinistas probably expected to fly their own aircraft from those airfields. They certainly weren't being built for Piper Cubs. A U.S. response to such a Soviet and Cuban presence in Nicaragua he said, would have to be obtained next door at the White House. Furthermore, General Williams asked rhetorically, why would the Soviet Union want to operate aircraft from Nicaragua?

On the basis of General Williams' remarks one shouldn't be very worried about Central America. After all he is the one who provides military intelligence and threat capabilities to the Department of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Either he is lying to us, because he doesn't want us to get worked up, or the U.S. government is in deep trouble. In either case he greatly underestimates the knowledge of his audience.

Of course I hope he was lying to us . . . for I fervently pray that the threat analysis he provides the Secretary of Defense includes the Soviet potential for outflanking the United States from the Caribbean Basin.

Morton, keep them coming! We are learning a great deal, one way or the other! I hate to say it but General Williams was a disaster . . . though a fellow West Pointer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sam", written in dark ink.

Samuel T. Dickens, Colonel USAF (Ret.)  
Director

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