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May 1, 1957

General Matthew B. Ridgeway
4400 Fifth Avenue
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Dear General Ridgeway:

Lieutenant Colonel Zimmer, with whom I am associated in defending Colonel John C. Nickerson, Jr., has shown me your letter of 21 March 1957 written in response to his letter to you of 15 March 1957. Needless to say, I was greatly disappointed to learn that you do not believe that any testimony you could give would be considered relevant and admissible in this case and hence, you were unable to agree to appear and testify as Colonel Zimmer requested.

In your letter to Colonel Zimmer you state, "nor can I agree that motive will be a key question in determination of guilt or innocence of such allegations". That statement is, generally speaking, the correct rule of law. Ordinarily, the motive behind an alleged criminal act is immaterial, but it becomes material and relevant when it bears on the issue of intent, and Colonel Nickerson's intent in this whole matter is the keystone of the arch we are building to support his defense.

When the Wilson Memorandum was published, Colonel Nickerson felt, and felt very strongly, that it represented another step---and a very long one at that---in a series of steps that have taken place during the past ten or twelve years to whittle down the Army and relegate it to a minor position in the over-all scheme of defense of this nation. He believes, and his reasons for belief are convincing to me, that there has been a campaign of overemphasis on air power paralleled by a campaign of de-emphasis on ground power, which is gradually leading the people of this nation to a position of real peril. That is, that air power, and air power alone, is being relied upon to a very dangerous degree. He also believes that if this trend is permitted to continue, the Army will appear to have little value in the eyes of the public, and even perhaps in the eyes of some of the civilian department chiefs in the Federal Government, except as a sort of constabulary or militia, fit only to maintain internal order and perhaps occupy and perform police functions in enemy territory after the Air Force has won a war single handed.

I am not a professional soldier, indeed, my last direct experience in the armed forces of the United States took place in World War I, and I do not pretend to be even a quasi-armchair military expert, but Colonel Nickerson's thinking seems sound to me. And I for one, as a layman in so far as military questions are con-

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General Matthew B. Ridgeway

May 11, 1957

cerned, do not believe that this nation of ours can be adequately defended if we rely almost exclusively upon one branch of our armed forces. It appears to me that such a condition will inevitably result if an Army commander is forced to rely upon an Air Force commander for weapons control necessary to accomplish his mission. It has been pointed out to me that in the very early days of the Korean War that it was believed, and it was the official belief in Washington, that the Air Force alone, together with some assistance from the South Korean army, could stop the onrush of the Communist hordes from North Korea. But, that belief proved to be erroneous and it was not until General Douglas Mac Arthur secured the permission from Washington to send in ground troops that we were able to begin to slow down and eventually halt the Communist aggressors. Colonel Nickerson has explained to me what a great advantage it would have been to you when you commanded the Army in Korea, if you had a weapon somewhat like the Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile now being developed at Redstone Arsenal, which could be fired with accuracy and immediately upon your orders, just the same as you could order your artillery to fire upon a given target---and that without going through an Air Force commander to get the job done. In short, it is possible that your magnificent "Operation Killer" could have been even more successful than it was---the success of which I might add, was spectacular and thrilling to the people back in the United States. In Colonel Nickerson's explanation he has made it clear to me what a great advantage it would have been to you at that time to have such a weapon at your disposal and which could be located hundred of miles to your rear, safe from attack, even by guerrilla bands, and without the delay in the effectiveness that always accompanies the displacement of conventional artillery, either forward or to the rear.

The central question in this case goes far beyond the bare allegations of unauthorized release of classified information. The real question is Colonel Nickerson's motive and intent. I am deeply convinced he acted from the highest motives that an American can have---from an overriding intent to protect the security of the United States. He acted fearlessly, resolutely, and courageously, and was willing to place his career in jeopardy to defend what he thought was---and still thinks---the best interests of our country. I think he is a loyal patriot, wholly dedicated to the protection of his native land and that he deserves the support of all loyal Americans.

General Matthew B. Ridgeway

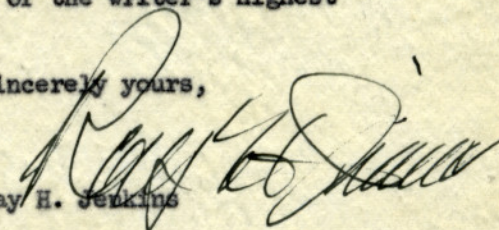
Apr May 1, 1957

I am persuaded that I know how you feel about the matters I have discussed. Your series of articles in the Saturday Evening Post last year were most illuminating and instructive, and shed a great deal of light on your way of thinking.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask that you reconsider the answer you gave to Colonel Zimmer.

Awaiting your reply with interest, and with assurance of the writer's highest regards, I am

Sincerely yours,


Ray H. Jenkins

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