

Letters to the Editors

Pseudonyms may be used only if your letter includes your correct name and address.

A QUESTION OF "STANDARD"

Cambridge, Massachusetts
December 10, 1954

To the Editors,

FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL:

I am happy to congratulate you on the dignified and cogent editorial in the December issue in regard to the dismissal of John Davies. You quite correctly ask "Just what was the 'standard required of Foreign Service Officers'" which was used in the case of Mr. Davies.

While I have assiduously tried to avoid regurgitation of the medicine given me about two years ago, I feel it may be instructive and perhaps helpful in searching for an answer to your question to recall the statement made by Mr. Dulles at the time of my "voluntary" retirement. After absolving me on counts of security and loyalty, Mr. Dulles gratuitously added: "I have, however, concluded that Mr. Vincent's reporting of the facts, evaluation of the facts, and policy advice during the period under review show a failure to meet the *standard* which is demanded of a Foreign Service Officer of his experience and responsibility at this critical time" (*italics mine*).

I do not know what "standard" Mr. Dulles had in mind. I do know that had he consulted my personnel file, he would have found that the officers under whom I served during this "period under review" and the Department's promotion boards must have used a standard somewhere near 180 degrees away from his own standard.

I am not writing this in spleen or to be cantankerous but in the hope that it may throw some light on the issue raised in your editorial. It is Mr. Dulles' prerogative to "review" policy toward China some ten years ago and find it wanting, but of greater pertinence in my case was the circumstance that he was admittedly under pressure to say something critical of me on the occasion of my retirement. He chose the device of an undefined "standard."

A similar and unconvincing device seems to have been used in the case of John Davies with more drastic and cruel results than in my own.

John Carter Vincent