

August 25, 1982

Dear Ken,

Just a quick note in reply to your August 10 letter.

While I'd hate to make a general comment on the question without seeing your draft, I would make a couple of observations:

Sullivan understood what was going on in Washington much better than Dr. B. understood what was going on in Iran.

With respect to the theme of your book--i.e., people's reactions, Sullivan was much more concerned about American safety than others seemed to be. Now, I don't know that alone should make him a "hero," but clearly the fact that in a situation where several factions were "gunning" for Americans, to have gotten over 50,000 people out (there were only three American casualties, as I note in the book) safely is nothing to sneeze at.

Having said that, one might also note that there were ambiguous cables coming out of Tehran, not the least because the situation was ambiguous--to have reported it any other way would have been misleading. Since Sullivan has done his book, etc., without notes, it's not surprising that most of the on-target stuff has been on his mind. If you're ever in this country, I'd be happy to talk further with you about this.

Sincerely,

John D. Stempel