

2/22/72

Dear Js,

For you non-TVers, a few facts and impressions before getting into today's work, which will have typing and reading, etc., mixed because thumb is troubling a bit.

We are, by the way, quite fortunate in being able to get out. Most secondary roads here are still closed and I doubt if the main road to which the one off which we live is even secondary. The wind is high again, and I'm grateful for a bright sun, which regardless of the temperature, near the freezing line, will take some of the snow away and will, during the course of the day, remove ice from the roads, some, anyway.

As I begin to think of the China visit, it is beginning to dawn on me that this is much, much more important in its potential than I had conceived likely, and it the Chinese who have made the difference. Despite the differences in the way they and we see things, they could not possibly have exploited our media approaches more expertly. From what I've seen on TV, the one gauche was that I reported by Cronkite. The sympathetic and respectful handling is incredible. I think it is clear that something good much come of this in the diplomatic area, and that while I'd felt to begin with the the Chinese and Nixon personally couldn't lose one they were face to face, I have now come to think that there is no possibility of this now being a major accomplishment for the Chinese.

If the US TV nets are as businesslike as they usually are, their crews will return with much worthwhile footage, some already aired live. The change in commentator will be hard for them to abandon totally after the dramatic events are over. In short, so far as the US is concerned, China has emerged, is as close to an equal as we ever regard anyone, and is worthy of respect and, indeed, admiration. There is an overtone to this that was totally absent with Khrushchev's visit here. I have seen nothing snide, and save for the one case, I've heard nothing not as good as anyone could expect.

All of today's CBS a.m. (7 EST) news was given over to this except for a few headlines. It opened with Pat in a Peking hotel kitchen, and that was warmly done and she was raving about everything - even human. Most of the rest, except for a few commercials and added commentary for the most time at the right moment, was a magnificent ballet, commentary by a Chinese woman married to an American, Gerald Tannenbaum. I think her name is Yuan Tri (Yuan Chi?). There was less from a Harvard China expert, an Australian. The thing that was most conspicuous was the way Charles Collingwood, an accredited Cold Warrior, threw himself into it, interpreting the mean of the performance, its message, spontaneously, correctly and, as he got happier and happier with his correct understanding of what he had probably thought with be mixed heathen art and heavy propaganda, with growing ecstasy. The Harvard sage was asked in advance of the beginning of the ballet to say a few choice words. They were favorable, saying that while this was a work of propaganda, it was a remarkably beautiful and sensitive thing he had seen and enjoyed often, that it would sound to western ears (as it did to mine) like Boheme in part and Tschikovsky, and that it would inspire Boheme-like emotional reaction. If there is in China such a thing as a premier ballerina, this one was simply magnificent, beautiful in face, body and art, as graceful a person as I have ever seen (including Dame Margaret, who suffers certain unpleasant liabilities!), as supple and expressive as a human can be. If this was true of her, I got the impression watching the rest of the cast that they are all premier artists by western standards. The performance was masterful and not just entertainment, like Swan Lake. I have never been fond of ballet, regarding it as artificial. Even though we knew it would force her to work even later tonight, Ldi and I didn't leave for her office until after it was all over, and if there is a rerun tonight of which we hear, we'll probably stay up for it.

Lighting was not designed for TV, so parts were not of broadcast quality. It is as these points where there were interruptions. The commercials on CBS continued to be Western Electric's and Merrill Lynch's. The first non-ballet content was Dan Rather noting the extraordinary attention in Peoples' Daily. I think this has to be the Chinese saying something positive and in the form of expectation. Mao's seeing Nixon was treated on the second day sort of like an audience with the pope, a great dispensation, into which meaning was read, and I suspect correctly. By the way, if you see the picture on the front page of this

a.m.'s Post- all eight columns at the top, quarter-page high, of Chou, translator, Mao, Nixon and Kissinger in Mao's study or den, I'd appreciate it if when you are not on the other side of the moon you could explain the arranging of what may not be books or all books on the shelves....Dyring one of these asides, Mr. Harvard (Ross Perrott?) noted that while the story of the ballet is a Hainan story, China had complained officially of some 500 U.S. violations of Hainan. This kind of thing was frequently aired from the time of the landing, and I am sure it will come as news to most Americans. For the first time, the mass of the unknowing and unthinking is getting a bit of news, not just the view of China and Chinese. The Chinese are coming across as calm, decent, friendly, happy human beings (yesterday there was a series of shots of Pat in amply-stocked stores, today her in a restaurant) who lead lives that they seem to enjoy. They are by no means represented as in any way discontented, and the appearance of this land, so strange to so many of us, is a good one, neat and clean, attractive, unhurried, etc.

From what I have seen of him now and know of him from the past, I think Chou is incomparably above Kissinger in all abilities, and I think that this will in itself account for certain extra benefits to China in whatever emerges from this. One thing that did rather surprise me when I saw in on the evening TV news last night is the rigor with which he pumped Nixon's hand and the length of the shake, continuing when Nixon turned away to someone else at the line. I read this as Chou's elation at Nixon's presence and that this, to him, means the presence alone is a plus for him/China, if there was a division on whether to respond favorably to Nixon's invitation to be invited.

I've typed enough for a while. Now I'll skim the Post. I really haven't any idea of how the papers are treating this, but when 3/4 of the Post's front page this morning is on it, it is major attention. I haven't had time to read the stories, esp. when as yesterday, I get three ~~xxx~~ papers on one day. But, let me give you the heads: Banner under picture- "Nixon Sees Mao, Chou, in Day of Cordiality." (Interestingly, not Mao Sees Nixon, the dispensation bit again.) The four center columns below the fold, about a quarter-page high, is Nixon and Chou toasting. Left two columns: Large ital, CHOU:, followed by smaller, two-line ital, "New Start Can Be Made in Relations". Symmetrical right-hand two columns, NIXON: "Let Us Start a Long March Together..."

With half an ear I've been listening to the radio, first to the inde all-news, now to the Post's WTOP. Treatment commensurate with TV, and not a single snide or nasty crack of any kind, everything else downplayed, even the airnapping of Joe Kennedy III.

Maybe there is a new day dawning. There is at least a read glow in the eastern sky.

Best,