

7/16/71

Dear Howard,

I've been too busy today to give any thought to Nixon's last night's announcement until I took Lil shopping a few minutes ago and went to the post office. While driving it occurred to me that for the first time in a long and vicious, entirely irresponsible political career, may now be in danger of assassination. I do not think any politician in recent years has done the genuine evil of this man, and in all that time, there has never been a potshot at him. The reason is that they all come from the right and he has been their darling, from the day he first entered Congress. Now, however, he has done the unpardonable. They do not understand that he was without choice (ditto for Kissinger, who had made a success of failure as long as any man save possible John Foster Dulles), that there is no choice for the country.

The hurt to the military and the industrial elements that serve the military will be great, thus there will be further damage to the economy built on such artificial needs. The stock-market reaction reflects this- slight, immediate up and then down more than up. That is no expression of confidence.

Without the reordering of society JFK planned, this, inevitably, means more unemployment, lowered heavy production. Without inflaming another country or part of the world, that is. What, then, will be the end?

With his lack of scruple Nixon has no imagination. He cannot conceive a future other than some part of the past. He has never conceived a program save anti-communism, and that was a plagiarism, a simple one he could handle. I think from what I have told you for your future, long-term project, you will recognize how unoriginal all of this is, that there is nothing new save what I believe we will see, incompleteness. This is an improvisation made possible because the Chinese took the initiative. But there is this difference: he has chosen the former greater evil, and therein especially may he have a survival problem.

I have heard of no military reaction. What little I have heard from the right is from the more extreme, and it is again and afeared.

It seems clear to me that this had to have been planned without any consultation with the military or, at most, with a very few he thought he might trust. Otherwise, I am certain that there would have been a leak to frustrate it, as any leak could have. The right would have screamed, as they really dare not, save for the most irresponsible, after the fact. A third-rate pol would understand this.

I hope I'm wrong on the danger to him, on the industrial consequences, things like that. I wish I thought he had the imagination to plan to take up the slack. A certain amount of idle industrial capacity is inevitable, but the other consequences can be mitigated as they could have been close to eliminated with the planning of which he is incapable, which can't be part of improvisation, with which a JFK would have proceeded immediately. The fact is that it is the wrong kind of JFK planning, coming from his limited understanding of his earlier period, that lays the basis for the current and to-come economic problems. His bastard Keynesianism was not his own and required production for waste as a deterrent to inflation.

We'll see in the future how this instant analysis holds up. It has been a tough day. Aside from catching up on several things, I mailed 17 letters tonight, and they are not all short...It is a good night for a dip, but unless Lil wants it, I'm going to go to bed and read until I get sleepier, which should take but minutes...If, as a result of the work you have done on your paper you disagree, holler.

Best,